776 [186] [641] tribe are superior to themselves in carpentry, and ascribe their skill to the fact that many of them are descendants of *Yulā-timat.* Some of the coastal tribes are said to believe that *Älquntäm* erred in the manufacture of many of the sea mammals, giving them, for example, human heads on fish bodies; he later rectified this by sending his Carpenters to adjust their form. This is not a Bella Coola belief. One elderly man stated that the skill of the Carpenters in painting and modelling was derived from a little girl named *Q̣oxltanao*; no confirmation could be obtained for this statement and the information was vague and unreliable.

Since their creation of the sky and many features of this world, as well as birds and animals, the Carpenters have entered but little into the lives of the Bella Coola. Like other supernatural beings, they are capable of going anywhere, but for many generations they have not been seen on this earth. [575] Their most important function, perhaps, is to act as patrons for various *kusiut* dancers. This subject will be described in detail in vol. II, chap. 1; for the moment it is enough to say that many supernatural beings regard members of this semi-sacred society as their protégés, and grant them power to per- [535] form dances. On these occasions masked figures are used to represent the patrons, thus enlightening uninitiated persons as to the appearance and attributes of various supernatural beings.

Among the many residents of *Nusmät·a* are two sons of *Älquntäm*, *Sänollixmulults Älquntäm* and *Sno'olxults Älquntäm.* The former in particular is dearly loved by his father and is often spoken of as *Nuslewamanxwultam*, "The Cherished One." [575] These two beings take no part in the affairs of mortals except as patrons of *kusiut* dancers. Like all supernatural beings they are considered to be immortal. Since *Älquntäm* has two sons it is to be assumed that he has, or had, a wife. Her name is not generally known, although she is sometimes spoken of as [538] *Nusmät·aian·a*, "The Woman of *Nusmät·a*." There are also many stories describing his amours with human women resulting in semi-supernatural offspring.

* 776 and gaping holes in the earth. In such regions no fire can be
[778] lit. The last known area of this kind is up the river behind
Green Bay, about four miles from the sea. So far as could be
learnt, *bābunk'* have never assisted Bella Coola in any way nor
played any part in the social life of the community. They are
feared on account of their supernatural power, but appear so
seldom that they are practically disregarded.

More common than the last, and accordingly more important,
is the *haohao*. It is an enormous bird with bony wings
and long, flexible beak. As it flies, the wings rattle violently,
and its note, an oft repeated "*Hao, hao, hao,*" can be heard for
miles. These birds are said to have been numerous in former
●[535] years, and are well known to all Bella Coola. Masked figures
[575] representing them are often used at *kusiut* dances. The *haohao*
is feared for its practice of inserting its long beak into the
761 rectum of anyone sleeping carelessly in the forest and drawing
* 776 forth his entrails. This can be prevented by standing upright
[789] a staff, such as all hunters carry, before going to sleep.

[539] A popular story states that once, not many years ago, a number of men camped at the edge of a canyon near their home, without taking this precaution. One of them was awakened by a slight movement of one of his companions and, looking up, he saw the long neck and beak of a *haohao* projecting over the rim of the canyon and sucking his partner's entrails. The convulsive shiver of the stricken man had awakened him. With his bow he shot an arrow into the bird's neck, causing it to disappear over the brink. Presently the long beak reappeared and he discharged another arrow with the same result. Again and again this happened until the attack ceased at dawn. The hunter assumed that a single bird had been repeatedly attacking, but when he looked over the edge of the cliff, he saw below a number of carcasses, each with an arrow in its throat. The canyon must have been a roosting place for the birds. His companions seemed still asleep, but when he investigated he found that all were dead; only the slightly enlarged orifice showed how they had been killed.

* 776 No *haohao* has been seen within recent years, but one informant
789 and her husband heard them on the south side of the Bella
Coola River about two miles from the sea. They would have

instructed people about the significance of death omens; it 773
was Raven who showed them the use of slings; and it was [622]
Raven who constructed secluded caves and ledges to serve as [823]
meeting-places for chiefs.

In brief, the Bella Coola regard Raven as an explorer, 773
teacher, and inventor, whose power, obtained from *Âlquntäm*, 776
enabled him to construct and outwit his maker, but not to
create. Much of his work was for the good of mankind, but
much was evil and malicious, an aspect which belongs to
mythology. Essentially human, Raven could have been included
among anthropomorphic, as well as among zoomorphic
beings. He differs from most of the supernatural ones in
belonging entirely to the past, as his descendants have none [825]
of the first Raven's power. It is doubtful whether he still
exists, but in any case he has long since ceased to take any
interest in the affairs of the Bella Coola, who consider him
only as a figure of mythology and ancient history.

SUPERNATURAL BEINGS OF THE VEGETABLE AND MINERAL KINGDOMS

Bella Coola beliefs concerning anthropomorphic and zoomorphic 776
beings are relatively clear and exact; their appearance 824
is known, their powers and functions recognized. The supernatural
attributes of trees and plants are less definite. *Âlquntäm* created the former in the beginning of time, and they were consequently able to talk and act like human beings at that distant period. Owing to the degeneration of man, mortals are no longer able to converse with trees, although the latter can still understand our remarks. In a vague way, the Bella Coola continue to think of trees as having human personalities, but so little is known of their powers, and they enter so seldom into contact or conflict with mortals, that they are practically ignored.

In an equally vague manner, Nature is regarded as a
Mother, giving birth to the trees and plants. One of the [535]
kusiut dances portrays this birth of the flowers every spring [575]
(II, p. 196).

774 becomes critical. Only a shaman (I, p. 539) can return one, and
755 if he fails death always results. In some cases a spirit leaves
[753] its owner without apparent reason; he becomes insane, tries
to eat dirt, and his relatives realize at once what is the matter.
[756] They summon a shaman who takes off his cape, hangs it like
a pouch on his stick, and points it in all directions as he sings
his shaman's song. Finally he locates what is missing, and
traps it in his cloak, which he places around the sick man.
This restores the element and the sufferer recovers immediately.
Another method is for the shaman to press the back
of the patient's neck, and by blowing and spitting cause the
wandering spirit to return. Either cure must be performed
by a shaman because of the supernatural power required.

774 Spirits can be extracted in various ways. Shamans can
draw one forth by sucking at the back of the neck between
their cupped hands; in former times, some were so powerful
that they could extract them by their mere presence. During
774 *kusiut* dances (II, chap. 1), the uninitiated are told that if they
575 enter the house where a ceremony is taking place, or even pass
● [535] on the sidewalk outside the door, their spirits will be drawn
from them by the power within and attracted to the dancer
or to the sacred platform on which he is concealed. Many
[178] stories are told of this, which were firmly believed by the uninitiated
until the last few years. Members of the society
claim that their great power acts as a magnet to the spirits of
all but their associates, except children in arms; the latter can
be taken by their mothers into the house, because their supernatural
elements have not developed sufficient strength to
774 leave their bodies. A person may also lose his spirit through
a sudden shock. If two people meet unexpectedly in the forest
and one of them shouts loudly at the other, even if only in fun,
the spasmodic contraction of the muscles is enough to expel it.
[761] The person to whom this happens falls down as if dead, and
[756] though he soon recovers, his spirit has left him, and if it is not
brought back by a shaman he dies a lingering death.

775 At death, the spirit permanently leaves the body. In some

Ceremonial chastity is considered almost a necessity to 831
hunters, and in former years a man would rarely, if ever, set 785
out to seek game without fortifying himself by at least several
days of continence followed by washing. In the few cases [224
known of a female assuming the clothing and activities of a 783
male, she has been forced to hire a man to sleep with her on 838]
the proper nights before starting to hunt. But hunters are by
no means the only ones to observe ceremonial chastity. If a
man wants to build a salmon-weir, it is by this means that he
makes himself strong enough to succeed; if he plays cards, [525]
good fortune is sought in the same fashion. The guests at a
potlatch observe ceremonial chastity so that their host may [431]
not forget them in his distribution of presents, the host, that his
guests may arrive on time. The *kusiut* dancer thus fortifies [575
himself for the performance of a dangerous ritual. In this way 535
a man experiences dreams foretelling the future. In every 787]
desire or activity of life, ceremonial chastity is a potent means
of success, not infallible, usually combined with prayer and in
many cases with sacrifice, but a background and accompaniment to every means of propitiation. If a man has conspicuous [777]
ill-luck, it is because he has failed to observe ceremonial
chastity; if he succeeds, it is because he has done so. At the
present time there is living in the Bella Coola valley an old
white man who for years has ranged the mountains in search
of gold; he has been unsuccessful, and the Bella Coola believe
that he will never succeed until he observes ceremonial chastity.

The strength which a man may acquire through the practice of this rite is almost limitless. A man may be ailing on [753
account of the leaning of his tally post, but, if he energetically 777
and faithfully observes chastity, it will become straightened,
whether automatically or through the agency of *Älquntäm* is 755]
uncertain. After the termination of a long period of contin- [774
ence, a man's spirit is so strong that his friends place their]
hands on the back of his neck in order to absorb some of the
power radiating from his spirit. Ancient myths record how [773]
the mere force engendered in a man's body by lengthy abstin-

614 The converse of this process of loss is the assimilation to
an origin myth of names originally brought into the ancestral
553 family by a woman from abroad. Unless intercourse and
178 friendly relations were maintained by "return marriages," in
773 a few generations no tradition would be remembered to account
for the name, and this, if used at all, would be interwoven into
the well-known ancestral myth. Hence a myth is not static
with regard to the names embodied in it. These change from
generation to generation; it is probable that elements of the
story itself suffer like additions and alterations, even though
the people do not consider this to be the case.

611 The Bella Coola regard the ancestral family as a social unit,
614 not only in terms of the present, but as stretching back to the
first settlement of the earth. Viewed from this angle, it is in fact, though not admitted to be so by the Bella Coola, a unilateral grouping with patrilineal descent, which may, in both the most recent and most ancient generations, be marked by matrilineal descent instead. A man frequently uses prerogatives obtained through his mother, her mother, or even her mother's mother, but it is tacitly assumed that for many previous generations such rights passed in the patrilineal line. Sometimes this succession extended back to the beginning of time; in other cases, prerogatives were transmitted matrilineally for a considesable period after the settlement of the earth, before gradually becoming patrilineal.

614 It has been thus far assumed that the only prerogative
wrapped up in an ancestral name is a knowledge of the myth
424 in which it is embodied. But there are others. For example,
551 several of the first inhabitants of the world are said to have
erected totem-poles, each of which was displayed by its owner
at the gathering when he took for himself a name. Thenceforth,
[532] the only person entitled to use that particular totem-pole design was the person with the legal right to the name in
[535] question. The same principle governs all dance names; each
entitles its owner to perform a certain ceremonial. Thus it is
possible to enlarge the previous definition by saying that:

establish himself with the traditions of his new home. This 621
is another illustration of the patrilineal tendency of the whole [614]
organization. [553]

Politically, the village is the most important Bella Coola
unit. Usually, though not always related to one another, the
inhabitants are always friends. If an attack is made on a
village by a hostile war-party, all the inhabitants suffer equally.
On the other hand, if the residents decide to attack another [628]
settlement, there is no compulsion for anyone to share the
burden. Each individual, with the exception of slaves, follows
his own inclination. In the case of murder or other wrong
inflicted by an individual, the responsibility rests on his imme- [682]
diate family, not the village. Factions within the village seem
to have been unimportant; individual jealousies were common, [578]
and often led to murder, but if a family became unpopular or [627]
considered itself aggrieved, it usually moved to another village.
Neighbouring settlements were generally on friendly terms and [628]
often assisted each other in war, but this was not compulsory.
Indeed, cases are known in which a war-party from the outer
coast, about to attack *Sɩnxɬ*, passed within a quarter of a
mile of *Q̣omqo·ts* without its inhabitants even warning their
threatened neighbours.

As far as internal organization is concerned, the village is
as fluid a unit as are most Bella Coola groupings. If one indi- 622
vidual has attained a position of eminence through the potlatch 554
system (vol. I, chap. IV), he is "chief" of the village, and his
advice is generally followed. If several men have approx- [556]
imately the same importance, there is no dominating figure.
In any case, a chief lacks executive authority, and such obedi-
ence as he receives is due to his personal influence. Some slight
deference is paid to the man who uses the name of the eldest
of the first group of settlers, the first chief, but this is not suffi-
cient to warrant the title of "chief" with the significance usually
attached to the term. The important members of the village 621
are accustomed to meet for the discussion of ceremonial mat- 623

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621
623 ters, and the village constitutes a unit for all dances; in fact
[535] this ceremonial unity is its most important function.

[796] With the exception of a few villages built on the seashore,
each Bella Coola settlement consists of a row of houses on the
361 river bank. These are of the usual rectangular, plank-built
[184] type typical of the North-West Coast. In front of them
[342] stretches a sidewalk, usually supported by piles on the side
nearest the river to make it level. The houses, too, in many
[171] cases have piles beneath their front ends, made necessary by
the steep slope of the bank. In large villages there may be two
rows of houses, behind and above one another. Usually there
[487] is a rough path parallel to the row of houses at the very edge
of the river. The number of houses varies; before the smallpox
[164] epidemic some villages contained as many as thirty or forty,
others, only two or three. There is no definite arrangement of
the houses; anyone may build where there is a vacant space.
[433] Much the same arrangement occurs in the sea-coast villages,
each of which depends for its main sustenance on an ocean
fish-trap, as the river villages depend on a salmon-weir.

342 The central part of each house is occupied by a large fire,
[354] often sunk a considerable distance below the level of the floor,
and around this is an open space free to all. Toward the side-walls
are raised the partitions, forming bedrooms for the different
families, or for different members of one. In many cases
the flooring is removed in three or four parts of the house for
small fires on which different groups cook, the central fire
being used for heating and for more important meals. The
[592] number of families occupying a house depends on its size; an
[622] important chief, with many relatives, often builds an enormous
house which is occupied by ten or more families; smaller houses
contain only two or three. Life in the larger houses is free
and open; people are constantly passing in and out, and any-
[261] one present when food is being distributed is given a share as
a matter of course. Most of the houses are decorated with
[353] carved upright posts and paintings on the beams and back-wall.
[535] A door through the latter leads to the back-room, so important
in dances.

ened by the age-long power of his ancestor. Finally, in old 554
age a powerful chief is careless where he seats himself; his 556*
fame is so great that he can afford to disregard all conventions. 622
[183]

POWER OF CHIEFS

It will be seen from the foregoing that chieftainship among the Bella Coola does not depend on hereditary rank, still less on an elective principle, but on the individual's prestige as displayed, especially in his ability to acquire for himself a firm seat by the giving of presents. As he continues to do so his influence becomes ever greater. Consequently, it is impossible to state clearly what are the powers of a chief; such depend upon his prestige and influence. For a Bella Coola chief has no executive or judicial authority; what deference is shown to him depends on his success as a man, a factor which is constantly rising or falling.

The coming of the white man has enabled the Bella Coola [177]
to earn comparatively large sums of money by trapping and
fishing. This in turn has enabled nearly everyone to give at [434]
least one potlatch, a very different state of affairs from that
which prevailed in the last century when it required years of
toil for a man to amass the necessary food and skins. Consequently, in many towns there were no men who had given
potlatches, so that a man's prestige was estimated by the [431]
presents he had given at smaller ceremonies. Sometimes, [535]
moreover, a man preferred to increase his fame by giving rites
of a different nature, such as *kusiut* dances, and the presents
then distributed might elevate him in the eyes of the community, to a position above that of a man who had given a
potlatch. This, however, was unusual.

After a fourth potlatch a man is accorded a position of
eminence, and is termed a *numitl* chief. *Numitl* is an untranslatable word, with the significance of "passage," an allusion
to the amount of goods which have passed through his hands.
Jealous and vulgar-minded persons pun on the word, applying [578]

184 standardized. Boys and girls helped their parents, and there
476 was no definite age at which they ceased to do so. The fluidity
* 556 of the Bella Coola system was contrary to any standardization.
The more important a chief became, the more did he receive
from dependent relatives, but the more did they expect in the
way of "return presents." It was advantageous to be generous,
within the family circle as well as without, since life was so
public that every transaction even of a "private" nature, was
well known. Unquestionably, a greedy and strong-minded
individual must frequently have taken advantage of help from
his housemates, but there was no strict code of ethics in regard
to this. In brief, it may be said that the acquisition of wealth
was an unstandardized, individual, matter; its distribution
was likewise according to individual volition, although within
a rigidly defined tribal pattern.

Susaak Society

551 The ancestral names that chiefs desire to raise to a position
* 556 of eminence are usually embodied in myths dealing with the
575 first settlement of this earth, names which belong, as has been
stated, to the ancestral family. Many of these traditions
614 record other designations as well, each of which carries with it
● [595] the prerogative of performing a type of dance known as *susaak*.
These will be spoken of, henceforth, as *susaak* names. The
Bella Coola do not know the meaning of this term. These
[553] names, like ancestral ones, are the potential property of members of the ancestral family, but can only be assumed when
duly validated by presents. Such an assumption follows a
553 period of seclusion in the back-room of the house. Both men
* 556 and women are eligible. A person may be secluded in this way
575 a number of times, acquiring a new *susaak* name on each occasion, but as presents must be distributed every time, it follows
[562] that only the children or relatives of wealthy chiefs can be so
favoured. It is desirable to have the bestowal of a *susaak* name
occur at a potlatch, since guests from foreign tribes are then

present, and the fame of the initiate is thereby carried farther 553
afield than would be possible if only Bella Coola were in atten- 556*
dance.* Every individual duly secluded and given a *susaak* 575
name feels himself ceremonially allied to others who have had
a similar experience, and they form a grouping which may be
termed the *susaak* secret society.

The close connection between this society and chiefs is 575
obvious from the presence of names of each type in the same 622
ancestral myths. None the less, every chief, that is a person
with duly validated ancestral name and seat, is not a *susaak*, [553]
unless he has validated a *susaak* name for himself and undergone
the period of seclusion. Conversely, a man may be a duly
authorized member of the *susaak* although lacking a seat and
the other marks of chieftainship. The relationship is, however,
so close that the Bella Coola think of the *susaak* society as a
society of chiefs. *Susaak* dances take place at potlatches and [535]
funerals, and occasionally at gatherings of less importance.
Difficulties arise at the death of a chief who has failed to use [766]
some of his goods for the acquisition of a *susaak* name. Such a
case took place at the death of an important Bella Coola in
the summer of 1923. Theoretically, he was ignorant of *susaak* [189]
rites, but after much discussion these were used on account of
his importance as a *numitl* chief, an instance of the manner in
which a man's personal importance over-rules ceremonial
dictates.

The Bella Coola believe that only some of their *susaak* 424
name-prerogatives came to this earth at the beginning of time
with their first ancestors, and that many more have been ac- 551
quired later by supernatural experiences. These were especially 575
common among their forbears as they ranged over this earth 773
seeking places to settle in the beginning of time. No *susaak*
name can be assumed casually; each must have had a
specific origin. There are few *susaak* origin myths, though
theoretically there should be one to account for every name.
The explanation appears to lie in the undoubted fact that many [177]
susaak prerogatives have been acquired comparatively recently

*556 wards and forwards sway the contestants with shouting and merriment, and those who have failed to carry away their boxes of food hasten to remove them out of the danger zone. It is a time of licence, and even one of the most influential chiefs may be struck by the ram or his food scattered without consideration. The ram is driven back, but those who bear it steer the log so that instead of passing out through the door it strikes the front wall, shattering some of the boards with their old paintings. With a shout they drive forwards again until part of the wall at the back of the house is likewise destroyed. Then those within the house gain the mastery and the log is carried outside, dragging its struggling bearers with it. They drop the log and return inside as if nothing untoward had occurred. This destruction of the house walls is a necessary preparation for their replacement with new paintings on new boards. When quiet has been restored a herald stands up.

"Listen!" he cries. "Ye chiefs, ye wives of chiefs, and ye commoners, soon we shall hear the supernatural beings."

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Then the singers[*] beat out the tune of any *kusiut*. He whose song it is begins to dance, using the type of which he has the prerogative, but as the supernatural being with whom he has a ceremonial affinity is not present, the dance is not considered sacred. As soon as one *kusiut* has finished, the tune of another is beaten, and he too dances. The singers change from *kusiut* to *kusiut*, and please themselves about the order in which they shall dance, also about how many shall perform. This continues until late in the night. Then they beat out a *sisaok* tune and the member of that society to whom it belongs performs his dance, a non-sacred affair, like those of the *kusiut*. One after another dances as his or her tune is beaten out, until dawn approaches. Meanwhile several *sisaok* have been sent outside 000

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[104] [*] Henceforth in this monograph the term "singer" will be used as a translation of the Bella Coola word, [illegible]. The singers sit together behind the fire. It is their duty to remember the tune and text of every song; to beat out this tune for every dancer and to accompany him by singing the words of his song.

533 *556 575 This is presently heard. Y may be in his own house, but at once any number of *sisaok* rush in and conduct him, concealed in their midst, to the back-room of X's dwelling. All the *sisaok* of the village begin to gather there; those who are not members of the society are also free to enter the main part of the house, though they cannot take any part in the proceedings. [781] They lurk near the door, watching with interest mixed with fear, and ready to flee if the danger from supernatural beings seems too acute.

After some delay, a whistle is heard at intervals, gradually becoming louder as if the supernatural being, of which it is the voice, were coming nearer. Presently it sounds immediately outside the door, and a *siki* rushes forth. He returns in a moment, followed, amid the breathless excitement of the uninitiated, by a figure masked as a bird or animal. [532] The design represents Y's crest, or some creature with which one of his ancestors came in contact, and which is therefore regarded as having the same sociological importance. A member of the society has carved the mask, another wears it, but this the uninitiated do not know.

[776] "It is a *tatwinam*,"[illegible] they gasp.

The figure crosses the house and bends down beside the singers to whom it appears to be whispering. Presently they begin, softly, to tap out a song in rapid time as if the supernatural visitor had just taught it to them. It is divided into two or three parts and the theme is taken from Y's ancestral myth.[illegible] After two or three rehearsals, the singers beat out the time more loudly and accompany it with their voices, while [535] the masked figure dances. A number of older *sisaok* accompany the performer as he whirls around the house; it is pretended that this is necessary to shield the spectators, though the real function is to guide the dancer whose sight is handi-

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[illegible] Meaning, "What is displayed," or, "A materialization."

[illegible] If the neophyte is a son or other near relative of the chief who is giving the potlatch, the theme may consist of boasting references to the goods about to be distributed. This is customary for X himself if he performs as a *sisaok* at the actual ceremony.

capped by the mask. If the *tatwinam* represents Wasp[14] or Grizzly Bear, he does not make a circuit and a fluent *susaok* explains that to do so would be unsafe owing to the ferocity of these animals. When the song is ended, the figure passes into the back-room. After a short interval it reappears, recrosses the house, and leaves by the front door, to the accompaniment of increased whistling. 533 556* 575 [535]

A few myths embody two *tatwinam*. In this case, a second figure presently enters and the same ritual is repeated for a second song. This usually differs, musically, from the first, being in three parts and with even more rapid time. More often, the second song is merely beaten out by the singers without the appearance of a *tatwinam* to supply an obvious source.

This is the normal, but not the only practice with regard to a *tatwinam*. In some cases the figure does not appear until after the singing of the first song, and the uninitiated are told that it has been attracted by the music. In this case it passes into the back-room, later to reappear and leave by the front door. An announcement is made that it has brought a strange power, that Y has become peculiar, and that his name is now, for example, *Qoaqwasila*. A herald bears this news through the village. A second song is then sung in due course. 556* 575

The *tatwinam* is difficult to classify among Bella Coola supernatural beings. It appears in the form of an ancestral crest, but the *susaok* do not seem to have taught the uninitiated to regard it as Y's actual forefather. It remains as a supernatural embodiment of his crest, a materialization of an element of family history, and a motive for the use by Y of a mask representing the apparition. The uninitiated do not seek farther; they have seen a wonderful sight and are content. [776]

Several of the older *susaok* stated that the *tatwinam* concept was not indigenous to Bella Coola; it had been recently [177 776]

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[14] None of the first people came to earth as Wasps, but several received so much help from these insects that they are regarded as crests by the descendants of those whom they assisted. [773 825]

Poor people, white guests, or others from whom no return can 553
possibly be received, share equally in the distribution; the 556*
money goes to all to validate the transaction. On the other
hand, X expects that the presents, if any, made to a few indi- 575
viduals after the general distribution, will be returned with interest. In selecting the recipients of these he has been animated, first, by the necessity of repaying old debts, and secondly by his desire to make good investments in the shape of presents to those likely to show their chiefly nature by returning with heavy interest. No request is ever made for such
repayment, but as the transaction has been publicly an- [558]
nounced, a man fears to fail to repay, since that would lower his prestige. No one may refuse a present, no matter how embarrassing it may be.

After the gifts have been distributed the songs of the
initiates are practised. [533] Members of the *susaok* society join in with the singers; the other spectators listen attentively, full of interest, but take no part. X with his helpers then gives food to all, and they depart.

Before the coming of the white man a potlatch was a rare 535 ●
event, and *susaok* members were initiated at local gatherings. 556*
The period of confinement was the same as that just described,
but instead of merely practising the songs during the interval, 575
the initiates appeared and danced to them. It will be con- 177
venient here to describe that ritual, emphasizing the fact that at a potlatch, when the initiates can be confirmed in the presence of foreign guests, this preliminary rite does not take place.

After the distribution of goods the singers beat out[*] the 292
tune of any one of the initiates, and all emerge in close suc-
cession from the back-room, each wearing a blanket, without 535
distinctive design, a collar of dyed and pounded cedar-bark 556*
decorated with pendant weasel skins, and the distinctive *susaok* 575
head-dress (see Plate 15).[1/a] This consists of a circlet of grizzly
bear claws, surmounted in front by a small forehead mask; from 237
the inner side of the circlet there rise a number of sea-lion

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[*] The present tense is used for uniformity.

[1/a] [See cat. 116, facing p 218 - ANALYST]

292 whiskers over which is scattered eagle down. From the back
● 535 of the head-dress hang weasel skins. In Bella Bella it is said to
* 556 be customary for a skin to be added on every occasion when a
575 *susaok* is confined to the back-room. This may happen as many
as fifteen times to the child of wealthy parents, and a few Bella
[237] Coola have adopted the practice of marking each with a skin.
Usually, some six or nine are hung in two tiers, without consideration of the number of times the wearer has been in seclusion. The central figure of the forehead mask is a head with
[532] a hooked nose, the recurved hook being joined to the face
itself. This figure does not vary with the wearer's ancestral
myth, and no one knows what it represents. This design is
[177] said to have been introduced to Bella Coola from the north a
few generations ago; before that time the head-dress consisted
[237] of a circular band of dyed cedar-bark, decorated with the tail
[824] feathers of one of the large woodpeckers. The Bella Coola call
it simply, "forehead mask." Each initiate carries a hollow
[532] rattle, carved in the shape of a bird, which he holds in his right
[534] hand, belly uppermost. Long, long ago, when a dancer failed
to do so, the rattle became alive and the bird flew away; hence,
this rule has been obeyed ever since.

535 Each initiate takes up his station in some part of the house
* 556 behind the fire and dances to the beating of the sticks. The
575 left hand of each is clasped behind his back and in his right he
holds the rattle and keeps it in constant motion by shaking his wrist. Ability to do this is one of the marks of a good dancer. Keeping the body stiff and the legs close together, he rises with slight jumps, barely altering his position on the floor. Sometimes he slowly turns around sunwise[17] in his series of jumps, at other times he does not alter his position. The head is bent from side to side and downwards at each jump, causing the eagle down to fly in all directions. *Susaok* assistants blow more of the material on to the head-dress at intervals (see Plate 16). 1/1

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[821] [796] [17] The Bella Coola believe that the sun moves from east to south to west to north. Many ceremonial movements follow this direction, which will henceforth be described as sunwise.

1/1 [See cat 116, facing p 219 - ANALYST]

As the dances proceed, those women who have the prerogative 535 ●
for doing so, utter a peculiar droning cry. After dancing, the 556*
initiates return to the back-room, where they doff their attire. 575
The ceremony concludes with the distribution of food. [424]

The initiates are now free to leave their place of concealment, as each has become a legal member of the *susaok* society. Some young men, sons of influential chiefs, are secluded a number of times, others but once. The oftener a youth is
secluded, the greater is his prestige, because goods must be [554]
distributed on each occasion to validate his name. At the present time, there is considerable uncertainty about the exact details of the ceremony, for it has been so easy of late years to give potlatches that the simpler rite has fallen into disuse; some informants state that each initiate should emerge alone and dance by himself. This concludes the shorter ceremony, but with a potlatch the dancing is reserved until the coming of the foreign guests.

DELIVERING OF INVITATIONS

Returning now to preparations for the true potlatch; it 556*
does not matter whether the ceremonies already described are
carried out before or after the departure of messengers to invite [203]
guests from abroad. Although X usually consults his relatives and friends as to whom he shall invite, this is entirely optional. In giving his invitations X is actuated, first, by a desire to summon those from whom he has previously received hospitality; having accepted presents from them he must discharge [558]
the obligations or sink in social estimation. Considerations of friendship also enter into his selection, and he will likewise invite anyone whom he wishes to put to shame by a lavish display of wealth. It is taken as a matter of course that each guest will be accompanied by a number of followers, members of his family, slaves, or adherents.

Acting on X's instructions, a herald invites the people of [203]
his village to X's house. X stands up and announces to them [484]

203
556*
[484]
[726]

the potlatch is recognized to such an extent that an attack upon envoys is unthinkable, though one or two myths recount how this unwritten law was violated on rare occasions. A canoe meeting potlatch messengers veers over to the other side of the channel to give them the right of way.

[575]
[262]

On reaching the destination the canoe is brought-to close to shore until the inhabitants of the village have gathered on the beach, which they swiftly do on the arrival of strangers. The messenger sounds his whistle, the significance of which is fully understood by members of the *susaok* society. Any chief who wishes to show his wealth and importance will invite them to his house. As they are landing, he sends a herald to summon a number of influential people of his village, who seat themselves in their rightful places. As the messengers enter they are given seats on the bench behind the fire, the spot usually reserved for chiefs. A number of lads are called in to toast smoked salmon, and when this has been done the fish are broken into shreds by young girls and served to the messengers on a mat, in lieu of a table-cloth. The envoys do not deliver their message as soon as they arrive. On the contrary, they spend the rest of the day aimlessly talking with their hosts, and sleep in the house where they have been received.

203
535
556*

The following day likewise passes without ceremony, but towards nightfall the host summons all his fellow-villagers to his house. The singers take up their customary places and beat out a *kusiut* tune. Upon hearing his or her air, the owner of it starts to dance. Using their own discretion, the singers beat out the tunes of *kusiut* after *kusiut*, and each dances. In like fashion the singers beat out *susaok* songs, and the owner of each dances. Since the supernatural beings are not present, the dances are merely of a ceremonial, not a sacred, nature. When all have danced, each gives a present to the envoys. These gifts are not returnable. They are merely "eagle down," but it is necessary that something be given to validate the dances. The value is immaterial, so far as the purpose is concerned, though a chief who wishes to exhibit his chief-like

203 nature will try to bestow a valuable present. If a man is too
*556 poor to give anything, he can avoid the obligation by not
dancing when his tune is beaten out. The presents are piled
●[535] together, and then the host, aided by several important chiefs,
[537] distributes them to the messengers, at the same time making
laudatory speeches. The chief of the envoys receives more
than the members of his crew.

Then the messenger-chief stands up and announces the names of those whom X has invited to his potlatch, using in each case the ancestral designation of the person summoned. Then the envoys, in a body, go to every house in the village. Probably all to be invited are present in the house of the chief, yet the messenger-chief must call out in the doorway of each house:

"Chief So-and-so, prepare your paddles and leave tomorrow."

Early next morning the messengers rouse those whom they
have invited and, as a mark of respect, help them to carry their
goods to the canoes. There is an attitude of shaming
[558] combined with that of deference, since those assisted will have
been placed under obligations. They also take to their canoes
their own recently acquired goods. Envoys and guests set out
together in their respective craft, and only separate as they
near Bella Coola.

ARRIVAL OF THE GUESTS

*556 While the canoes containing the first party of guests remain
575 at anchor to wait for high tide, the envoys proceed at once to
X's house, now completely redecorated if not entirely rebuilt.
Here a huge fire is blazing, and members of the *sisaok* society
are passing in and out, making ready for the ceremony. Both
[302] men and women beautify themselves by painting their faces
in any designs they fancy, and by combing their hair and
placing eagle down upon it. The guests at anchor lay planks
[535] across their canoes so as to form a dancing platform. Then,
as the tide rises, the singers in the house beat out the tune of

one after another of the concealed initiates, while the audience, 535 consisting of *sısaok* alone, join in the singing. As the sounds 556* drift out to the guests, they too beat out some of their well-575 known *sısaok* songs.

At high tide, as the canoes draw near, carefully guided by poles and saddles, the *sısaok* troop down to the beach to meet the guests, led by a *siki*, who alone wears an apron of puffin [292] beaks and carries a rattle. The singers beat out one of his tunes and the *siki* dances on the beach, while the supernatural whistle which has been sounding from the back-room of X's house, is now heard at his side, blown by an assistant under cover of his blanket. After the *siki* has danced, the singers [533] among the guests, and there are always enough of them to make possible the beating out of the better known tunes, sing one of their *siki*'s songs as he dances on the platform surmounting the canoes.

The Bella Coola *siki*, surrounded by a group of *sısaok*, now begins to turn about in a frenzied manner, always sunwise, bending down, then straightening himself, twisting and writhing like a maniac. Finally, standing erect, he pretends to throw something to the foreign *siki*, and then falls to the ground. The recipient makes the motion of catching something heavy, and at the same time one of his accomplices in the canoe sounds another *sısaok* whistle, deluding the uninitiated observers into the belief that some power has been transmitted, which is the source of the strange noise. The visiting *siki* revolves four times; twisting and bending, then straightens up and throws back his cloak, to expose a mask representing *Mulakila*. This has been concealed there all the time, but the uninitiated readily believe it to be the creature which has made the noise, or else that it is an object miraculously made by this being. The *siki* revolves four times more, with the mask in plain sight and the whistle constantly booming, while a fluent speaker "explains" the meaning of it all to the uninitiated who are watching with interest from the background.

535 * 556 575 The reception of this power from his Bella Coola confrère enables the guest *siki* to dance at X's potlatch, if he so desires. In that case the guests are guided to X's house without further delay. If, however, he does not wish to dance, he goes through the motions of throwing something back to the Bella Coola *siki*, who pretends to catch it. He bends down, twists himself about, then throws back his cape—to display there the representation of *Mulakila*. At the time of throwing, the visiting *siki* had slipped his mask out of sight, so that those witnessing the transaction, ignorant of the fact that the recipient has had an identical mask hidden beneath his cape throughout, are suitably impressed. He now revolves four times, while an assistant, sheltered under a large cloak, sounds the whistle constantly. Then the *siki* makes the motion of throwing something to X's house, and after that the whistle sounds from within, while the man who had been blowing one beside the *siki* ceases. Thus the uninitiated are led to believe that the voice can proceed only from the place where the power over which the *siki* has control is situated.

* 556 574 The guests are conducted to X's house, to which a number of young men carry their goods. A meal of toasted salmon, provided by X, is served to them by a number of youths, all of whom are eager to undertake this task throughout the ceremony. A section of the house is allotted to each party of guests, and within that space they arrange themselves according to convenience. Some informants state that the first group to arrive is seated nearest the fire. The whole of those invited are not placed according to rank. The amount of space allotted to each party of guests depends upon their number, and there is no particular choice made of a section in the house. X, or more often some one who speaks for him, welcomes the guests, and a spokesman from among them makes a suitable reply, usually with the assistance of an interpreter. After the meal, the guests can remain where they are or go out. As many as wish to do so stay in X's house, but many prefer to

go to the homes of their friends in the village; it is a matter 556 *
of convenience, not of ritual. [574]

In the evening, there may be no rite of any kind, but X 535●
often invites everyone to his house for the performance of noncere- 556*
monial dances. The singers strike up one of his *susaok* or
a'alk (I, p. 273) tunes and he dances to it. Then a tune belonging
to one of his relatives is beaten out, and he too dances.
After several have thus performed, a meal is served and all
disperse. No supernatural beings are in attendance, hence
there is no solemnity to the occasion; the evening's rites merely
serve to show the guests the dances owned by their host and his
family.

As each party of guests arrives the same procedure is repeated. 556 *
X provides food for those who have assembled from
day to day, so he anxiously awaits the last-comers. When at 574
last they come the guests from all other towns are in their
allotted sections of X's house, and are free to make gibes at
the tardiness of those latest in appearing. Occasionally, hard [628]
feelings are engendered in this way, although it is an established
custom to mock at the last to arrive. They seat themselves
and a small amount of food is given them.

RITUAL CARRIED OUT BY THE GUESTS

Two youths, chosen by X for the purpose, sprinkle eagle 556*
down over the heads of all those present, as far as possible
blowing it first over the chiefs. It serves as a token of goodwill, [788]
and marks also the ceremonial nature of the occasion. [237]
Then a leading *susaok*, perhaps a *siki*, stands up and says in
effect: [575]

"Thank you for coming. You are welcome. We thank you
for coming to witness what X has done. He is delighted to
have you here, because he has lost many of his relatives and
wishes to perpetuate their memory. They would be grieved if
he did not do so."

An elaborate meal is now served by a number of young men. [264]

*556 The first course is dried cohoe salmon mixed with olachen
264 grease. The fish is first placed in boxes, approximately one
to every four persons, though a chief may be honoured by an
[262] individual box, and the grease poured over it. As always, any
food not consumed is carried away. Failure to do so would
[578] be an insult to X. Then round wooden dishes are distributed
into which are poured the berries of *Viburnum pauciflorum*.
[262] The waiters pour olachen grease over these and the mixture is
eaten with wooden spoons. These two foods are invariably
the first meal of a potlatch.

*556 If the *siki* of the last guests to arrive has not returned the
power given him by the Bella Coola expert, he now stands up
575 and shakes his rattle as a signal that he desires to start his
●535 dance. The Bella Coola *siki* also stands up, and the visiting
siki contorts himself and finally pretends to produce something
from his stomach, which he throws across to his colleague.
The latter feigns to catch it, cries *hoip* loudly several times,
and makes the motions of hurling what he has just received
into the room at the back of the house where the initiates are
concealed. Then he sits down. Meanwhile the last-to-arrive
party of guests have started to beat out the tune of one of the
sısaok[18] songs of their own *siki* who dances in time to it. Then
another song is beaten out and another member of the party
dances, and so on until all have danced who desire to do so.
Each wears his own head-dress and each performs in the
manner already described. After the dancing, the members
of this party of guests give presents to X and other Bella Coola
chiefs. There is no fixed ratio between the value of the gifts
*556 and the rank of the recipients, though chiefs receive more than
[554] lesser men, and X most of all. These presents are *spuxdjut*,
which may be translated as "eagle down-ness," merely a mark
of friendship and goodwill. They are not returnable. Goods
so received are distributed by X with his other possessions at
[578] the potlatch, care being taken not to return them to the donors,
which would be insulting.

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[18] *Xe·tie* songs (I, p. 217) are sometimes used.

After bestowal of these presents, the *siki* of the penultimate group of guests shakes his rattle, and exactly the same procedure is carried out by members of his party. They, too, give presents to X and the other Bella Coola chiefs. The same rites are carried out by each party of guests in the reverse order of their arrival. It is frequently near dawn before the first-comers have completed their dances and distribution of gifts. X then gives another meal to all, with no restriction on the choice of food. This concludes the night's ceremony, and the guests depart, except those who are staying in X's house. 556 *

THE POTLATCH: FIRST DAY

Considering the lengthy ceremonials of the preceding evening, it is not surprising that on this day no one stirs early. The guests receive their breakfast in the houses where they are accommodated, and meanwhile a number of young men gather in X's house to assist in the preparation of food for the main meal of the day. During the previous night a large amount of smoked mountain goat has been put in water to soak. This is now placed in a number of food-boxes, ready for distribution, water is added and hot stones lifted in to bring it to a boil. When the water comes to the boil, mountain goat grease is added, and then bearberries; it is usually about two o'clock in the afternoon before the meal is ready. The guests are summoned and the food given them, the chiefs, as usual, receiving more than those of lower rank. After eating they disperse to await the evening rites. [251] [252] [554]

It was impossible to obtain an accurate account of the ritual carried out on the evening of this, the first day of the potlatch proper. The ceremonial was of less importance than those preceding and following, and it has long fallen into disuse. The guests take up their accustomed places, and the Bella Coola members of the *susaok* range themselves near them and behind the fire. The corners next the door are occupied by non-members of the society. The singers beat out two of [182] 556 * 575 [535]

* 556 the best songs they have made for the initiates, and any of the
sısaok members of the audience desiring to "help" the initiates
575 dance to them, even X himself on occasion. By "help" no
[535] material aid is indicated; such dancing merely displays a
friendly and sympathetic interest. The initiates, resplendent in *sısaok* head-dresses, appear at the door of the back-room, and sometimes dance a few steps. Occasionally, at the conclusion of his song, a lad's parents, or other relatives, bring forward the goods which will be later distributed by X to the guests. On other occasions, this is reserved for the following day. Food is distributed and all disperse.

THE POTLATCH: SECOND DAY

On this, one of the two most important days of the whole ceremony, the following rites take place.

During the Day

(1) Communication to the foreign guests of the new *sısaok*
[553] names of the initiates concealed within the back-room; these names are the ones that have been made known to the Bella Coola before the potlatch proper.

(2) Payment to X by the members of his wife's family of the goods necessary to rebuy her from her husband.

During the Evening

(3) Repayment by X of debts owed to members of his own village.

(4) Return of a dead relative of X to visit the living.

(5) Distribution of presents to validate this appearance.

(6) In some cases, dancing by some of the *sısaok* initiates.

Early in the morning X gives each of his guests a wash-
[575] basin with the other necessary appurtenances for cleaning up,
[574] and towards noon all of those invited reassemble in his house. Three river canoes have been brought in and are ranged, two parallel to the side walls, and one parallel to the back wall, all far enough out to permit people to sit behind them. Boxes containing large quantities of red elderberries and olachen

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532
● 535
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PLATE 16

Photograph by H. I. Smith, *National Museum of Canada*

Eagle down being blown over a *sisaok* dancer

[facing p219]

*556 ings to reward carpenters and others who had helped X prepare
184 for his potlatch, but in Bella Coola this was usually done the
following night.

*556 Now comes what the Bella Coola regard as the most important
feature of the potlatch.[29] The singers strike up one of the
769 songs of a senior *sısaok*, perhaps a *siki* chosen for his skill in
535 acting. As he dances, clad in his ceremonial costume and
575 head-dress, whistling is heard without the house. A number of
sısaok are making the noise and they modulate it so that it
[533] appears to draw nearer and nearer. This is effected either with
whistles of different sizes or by blowing harder. The dancer rushes out of the house. The whistling continues in a series of short bursts, as if a conversation were being carried on in that language. The *sısaok* or *siki* returns, and the audience, silenced by the mystery of the affair, listens to his explanation:

"It is so-and-so," he announces, using the ancestral name of one of X's deceased relatives. "The crest has come to pay his son [or whatever relation X may be to him] a visit. I will bring him in."

While he speaks, continuous whistling is heard from without, but when he leaves the house it once more takes on the form of a dialogue. Presently he returns, followed by a masked figure in the centre of a group of members of the *sısaok* society.
[532] If the deceased's first ancestor had been an eagle, in that guise
the figure will appear—an eagle mask on his head, and his
whole body, except perhaps the feet, covered by a large blanket thickly covered with eagle down and furnished with painted wooden wings. The dancer is usually entirely blinded by this costume, but he is guided by a number of the *sısaok* whose presence is attributed to the necessity for guarding and paying honour to the supernatural visitor. Among those who accom-
[533] pany him there is always a man with a whistle, the note of
which simulates the cry of an eagle, and this is sounded at
intervals. The actor bends in imitation of a bird and shakes
[532] himself, lifting his head and opening the movable beak by

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[29] Though potlatches can be held without this feature.

means of a hidden string, while the whistle sounds. Then he 556*
stoops down and hops a few steps eagle fashion. Slowly, with 769
pauses and turnings around, the figure circles the fire and
retires through the front door, always attended by a number 535
of *sısaok*. The actor displays considerable dramatic ability, 575
and the performance is strikingly effective in the large, plank- [532]
built house, illumined only by a smoky central fire which
casts flickering shadows over the intently watching audience.
The dogs, alone unimpressed by the solemnity of the occasion,
skulk to and fro.

If a whale is represented, a large wooden frame-work is [532]
carried by several men who walk inside of it. Raven, bear, or
other animals may also be used, according to the ancestral
myth of the deceased. Some of the first people came to this
earth as men, but there have always been a sufficient number
of intermarriages to permit everyone to portray some bird or
beast, obtained from the family into which an ancestor married.
A supernatural object claimed to have been seen by a
forefather can also be used on these occasions. In some cases
a composite figure is used. Such may have the head of an [532]
eagle, a killer whale projecting from the back, and a raven on
its chest. In such a case those three creatures have been
connected with the ancestry of the deceased, and his spirit is
believed to have assumed those forms. Great individual choice [184]
is allowed in such matters.

If several of X's deceased relatives are being commemorated, the sound of whistling is again heard from without, a short time after the departure of the first masked figure. A senior *sısaok* goes out, and the same ritual is repeated. This time the masked actor represents some other bird or animal. Three, or in some cases four, dead people are thus shown, though one is more customary. The actual management of the figures is left to the direction of the carpenters who have made them. Often a foreign workman is employed, as a mark of respect for his skill. In spite of all precautions there are often delays about the final preparations, especially with regard

556 to a complicated figure such as a whale, and in that case an
769 expert dancer among the guests is called upon to perform. It
is announced that this is, "to make clean the road for the
[575] dead."

[535] After each masked figure has disappeared, the sound of whistling from without grows gradually weaker, as the apparition returns whence it came. In solemn silence X takes a copper[21] which he has had in readiness, breaks it across his knee,[22] and throws it either into the fire or down on the ground in the track that the figure has taken. Then the announcer calls out loudly:

"It is for his crest.[23] It has 'made bone for the dead.'" Then he continues, speaking for X and using the first person:

"My heart is glad at seeing my father.[24] At death he returned back on the path of my family's ancestors and donned our ancient crest. He now lives in *Nusmät·a*, whence he came to visit us and whither he has now gone back."

[178] The significance of the throwing down of a copper is entirely unknown to the modern Bella Coola, although they still perform the ritual. In some vague way it is felt that "bone," which may imply *stability*, has been provided for the deceased. The act thus appears in the light of an offering to the dead, but this sentiment is not clearly appreciated by the participants in the rite; the present has been made *for*, rather than *to*, the one being mourned.

The copper, now valueless, is picked up by any chief and given to a poor man.

After a short interval a number of youths begin to distri-
[562] bute presents, provided by X, which have been placed in readi-
ness. Gifts of equal value are given to all foreign male guests;
[431] while the women receive ones less valuable. These presents

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[325] [21] One of the plaques of native copper, such as were formerly beaten out cold and used as tokens of value by the coast tribes of British Columbia. Their employment by the Bella Coola will be described later in greater detail (I, p. 252).

[436] [22] The breaking is sometimes omitted.

[23] That is: "For the dead man, now in form of his crest."

[24] Or whatever relative the deceased may have been.

556* [769] [431]

are strictly non-returnable, being regarded as "eagle down,"[33] and having, therefore, a ceremonial significance. They validate and mark the importance of the representation just displayed. They are spoken of as having been shaken off by the deceased as he departed to return to his home above.

[575] [535]

If there are many *susaok* initiates concealed within the back-room, some of them may now be called upon to dance, but usually this is reserved for the following night. Unless some of those secluded are going to dance, food is distributed and all disperse.

THE POTLATCH: THIRD DAY

This is the day when presents are given and, with the previous, is the most important of the whole ceremonial. The following are its features.

During the Day

(1) Distribution of much food, and sometimes of insults to the guests by excessive presents, or by the destruction of valuables. [578]

During the Evening and Night

(2) Dramatic representation of some object connected with X's ancestral myth.

(3) Distribution of presents by X to recompense the craftsmen who have assisted in the potlatch.

(4) Repayments by X of gifts received at previous potlatches.

(5) Giving of presents by X to some of his guests.

(6) Distribution of presents to strengthen X's seat.

(7) Distribution of presents to strengthen, or establish, seats for a number of young men.

(8) Dancing of the *susaok* initiates. 556*

(9) Distribution of presents to recompense those who have assisted the *susaok* dancers. 575

(10) Distribution of presents to validate the *susaok* dances and the names thereby acquired by the initiates.

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[33] The Bella Coola state that the Kwakiutl term for this is *sesa* or *gesa*.

success, according to the Bella Coola, depends upon the goods expended in their establishment (I, p. 261). 556* [463]

Throughout all this ceremonial the initiates have been carefully concealed in the back-room. They are now eagerly, though with trepidation, awaiting their time to dance. The order of appearance is a matter of no importance. It is arranged by the singers, who send word to one of the initiates and then begin to beat out one of his songs. He emerges, clad in a ceremonial blanket, wearing a *susaok* head-dress, and holding a rattle in his hand. Taking up his station behind the fire he dances in time to the beating of sticks. As he does so, the speaker calls upon X's wife to bring forward goods as "cedar-bark mats for him to stand upon," or "cedar-bark mats to make soft his seat." These are piled at some convenient spot. After dancing, the initiate retires to the back-room, accompanied by one of the older members of the *susaok* society, perhaps a *siki*. This man presently emerges, saying: 556* 575 535

"It is most peculiar. An eagle is there now."[30]

At the same time a whistle sounds from the back-room, in imitation of the scream of an eagle.

There ensues a constant interplay of remarks between the heralds and those regulating the ceremony. One of the former may call out:

"Let us see it."

The elder returns to the back-room, saying, "I will bring it out."

There now emerges a figure masked to represent an eagle, or whatever bird or animal it may be, with a long blanket covering all but the feet. Any clever dancer is employed to wear this disguise, seldom the initiate himself. The "eagle" bends down beside the singers as if whispering a song to them, though in reality they have themselves composed it. They sing this as the masked figure moves around the fire, imitating the gait of an eagle with considerable dramatic skill, while an

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[30] Or whatever may have been the guise in which the *tatwinam* came to him, in itself dependent on his ancestral myth.

556 assistant blows a whistle, sounding like an eagle. When the
575 figure has disappeared into the back-room, the heralds discuss
with one another in a loud tone of voice how that was the form
[535] in which the initiate's ancestor appeared long ago. At the
present time there is uncertainty concerning the proper ritual
connected with the appearance of the *tutwinam* at this juncture.

A senior *susaok* then calls on X to bring forward goods, "to shield our eyes from the supernatural being." These articles, part of which may have been provided by relatives of the initiate, are piled beside those brought forward by X's wife, which may also have come from the same source.

[535] The singers strike up the second song of the initiate; again he appears and dances to it, then vanishes into the rear room.

The two assortments of goods are now distributed. First, those provided by X are presented to the singers who composed
[465] the songs for the initiates, to the carpenters who made the masks, the heralds, and announcers, and any others who have assisted; if any remain they are presented to the stranger-guests. Then the goods which are "mats for the dancer's feet" are distributed, entirely to the guests, and are said to have "become nothing" or to have "flowed away" in the transaction. Neither set of goods is returnable. These presents validate in the eyes of the guests, the right of the initiate to membership in the *susaok* society.

Then a second, third, or fourth neophyte is called out, one at a time, and the same procedure is repeated.[11] In distributing the goods, efforts are made to remember those guests who received nothing at the first distribution.

Toward dawn, one of the important chiefs, it is immaterial which one, calls out:

"I want a *siki*."

[789] It is understood that for this part of the ceremony a foreign expert is required, and one such comes forward according to previous arrangement. He retires to the back-room and re-

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[11] Though desirable, it is seldom possible for all the initiates to dance on the same night.

expenditure though he must forgo the prestige enjoyed by a 424
man who has been able to elevate his professional names in a 556
lavish manner. Selection is a constant factor in the social life 182
of a Bella Coola; the man who uses all his wealth to acquire a
firm seat cannot be "strong" in *sisaok* matters; the man who
desires to specialize in *kusiut* affairs cannot afford to display
an elaborate totem-pole. Amid these conflicting desires, it
often happens that a man somewhat neglects his professional
prerogatives, especially those of which the dignity has been
slightly lessened through superior skill shown by individuals [555]
endowed with no more than native ability. Upstarts of this
kind have always infringed upon professional dignity, and the [177]
coming of the white man has added a new factor which has
almost destroyed vocational prerogatives.

A'alk Dances

The most important, as well as the most spectacular, dances 177
that occur at potlatches are those given by members of the 535
sisaok society. In addition to these, a feature of many potlatches
is the performance of *a'alk* dances.[1] As already mentioned, 575
from 1870 onwards there have been many changes
in *sisaok* ritual; new elements have been acquired by the marriages [184]
of Bella Coola to members of the coastal tribes, with the
result that details of procedure vary at every ceremony according [796]
to the prerogatives of the donor. Since 1910, the
influence of white civilization has increased to such an extent
that *sisaok* ceremonials have virtually been abandoned.
This took place at a time when the ritual was in transition,
a state of affairs which rendered difficult the collection of
coherent information. *A'alk* dances are associated with
sisaok, but the addition of new features to the latter was
accompanied by a decay of the former. Both societies have
now almost ceased to exist, but whereas the *sisaok* organization
was abandoned during a period of change and accretion, that [128]

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[1] Called *a'alpw* in Kimsquit.

177 of the *a'alk* came to an end when it was already waning in
535 importance. It was impossible to obtain as much detailed
575 information about the latter as was desired, and it is even
128 possible that some of the facts recorded in connection with
sisauk ceremonial really belong to *a'alk* rites.

The right to perform an *a'alk* dance depends upon a duly
424 validated ancestral prerogative of which the obvious mark is
535 an *a'alk* name. Some of the first people brought down such
designations and dances with them from above in the beginning
575 of time, a few were acquired on this earth as gifts from super-
[773] natural beings. Those who have rights of this kind form a
loose organization which may be termed the *a'alk* society.
This is closely associated both with the *sisauk* society and with
chiefs, owing to the occurrence of these three types of names
in the same ancestral myths. One member of an ancestral
[556] family may use his goods to validate his ancestral name,
another to make himself a *sisauk*, a third to become an *a'alk*,
and an important chief, endowed with ability and wealth, may
be able to do all three.

A'alk dances are less spectacular than those of either the *sisauk* or *kusiut* societies, nor are rattles or whistles used. The prerogatives of a member are limited to his name, the right to perform a certain dance, and the use of a song which commonly describes some feature of his ancestral myth. Four types of dances are considered to be *a'alk*; the methods of acquiring and using any one of these are similar, so it is unnecessary to describe the differences before the actual account of the performance of each.

556 If there is a dormant *a'alk* prerogative in the ancestral
family of the donor of a potlatch, he usually chooses to validate
575 this as one of the features of his ceremony. He first consults
his wife and other relatives to ensure that sufficient goods will
be forthcoming, and if this matter can be arranged satisfactorily, he chooses some young relative as the recipient of the dormant right. It would be most unusual for the youth selected to decline the honour. Or some man, other than the

holder of the potlatch, may wish to confirm a prerogative and 556
requests the donor to allow this to take place at his ceremony. 575
Permission is never refused, since the more incidental rites, the greater is the prestige of the whole. The young man on whom the name is to be confirmed is always told what is planned for him, and his relatives instruct him what to do.

As the time for the potlatch draws near, the donor requests
the singers to prepare an *a'alk* song for the youth. The theme [533]
always deals with some incident of his ancestral story with
which the singers are already familiar. If a number of youths
are to be made *a'alk*, a song must be composed for each. The 532
carpenters are also requested to make for the initiate one, or
sometimes two, masks representing a supernatural being, either 556
human or animal, connected with the myth in which occurs 575
the *a'alk* name about to be conferred. The design is chosen by the senior members of the ancestral family concerned; it is usually, though not necessarily, the same as that employed by the last incumbent of the name. If the designation about to be confirmed is one which came down from above in the beginning of time, the mask usually represents the guise adopted by the first user of the name; if the prerogative were obtained on earth, it portrays the being from whom the right was received. These arrangements are made in secret, and are known only to the craftsmen, the donor of the potlatch, and his family.

On the night of *alástmm*, when the work for the potlatch is 556
allotted, the youth who is to be made an *a'alk* is confined 575
within the back-room of the house, presumably in company
with the *sisauk* initiates, though there is ambiguity on this point. After the general arrangements have been made, an elderly *a'alk* whose aid has been requested, suddenly rushes from the house as if he had heard some noise. One of the *siki*, or an influential chief, makes some allegedly witty remark as to why he has gone out, and then follows, taking with him the
dance head-dress belonging to the *a'alk*. This is identical with
the type worn by *sisauk*, one of the many points of resemblance [184]
[535]

556 575 [184] [292] [535] between the two societies. Presently the elderly *a'alk* returns, clad in his ceremonial costume consisting of the head-gear, a blanket, and a narrow apron from which hang deer hooves, small pieces of copper, or other jingling articles. The singers strike up his song, and he dances near the fire in a manner depending upon which of the four dances he has the right to perform. Again the *siki* leaves the house; when he returns he announces that a *tutwinam* is coming with a song for the youth, naming the one who is to be made an *a'alk*. A moment passes, and in stalks a masked figure depicting the form taken by the first ancestor of the novice, or the being from which one of his later forefathers received an *a'alk* prerogative. Sometimes two of these beings appear. The apparition circles the fire, stops beside the singers, and chants a song to them in a low voice. Then it enters the back-room and is seen no more. Presently the singers strike up the song they have just heard. To those who are neither *a'alk* nor *sisaok* it seems that the song was brought by the supernatural visitor; in reality, it is the one previously composed by the singers and taught by them to the wearer of the mask to lend realism to the performance. The youth concealed within the back-room does not emerge on this occasion, the song is merely sung in practice. Sometimes the masked figure appears during the daytime and walks openly along the shore of the river like a foreign guest, as indeed it is said to be.

[184] [178] The coming of a *tutwinam* is one of the points of resemblance between *a'alk* and *sisaok* rites. The older people agree that this has long been a feature of the former society, adopted by the latter in recent years. The description given in this section appears to be of the original and proper use, although, as already noted, the *sisaok* have recently employed *tutwinam* for somewhat different purposes.

It is uncertain whether or not the *a'alk* novice remains secluded any longer within the back-room. In ancient times he probably did, but with the recent growth of the *sisaok*

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society and decline of the *a'alk*, concealment has become limited 575
to initiates of the former organization.

No more *a'alk* dances take place during the potlatch preliminaries, [178]
but with the coming of the first group of foreign
guests, the host displays as many types of dance as he is entitled 556
to, including *a'alk* if he has the necessary prerogative. 575
On this occasion other *a'alk*, especially relatives of the donor, 535
give their dances, the only time that such are used at potlatches
except by novices receiving names. This is repeated
on the arrival of every party of guests.

Meanwhile the novice, or novices, has been practising the
proper steps for his appearance, which always occurs immediately
before the entry of the masked figure representing the
donor's dead relative. As already mentioned, there are four
kinds of *a'alk* dances, known as *nusqwal*,[a] *llaiyākam*, *qi'aqa*,
and *am'lel·a*. A similar song is used for a dancer of any one [533]
of these four; the text describes some small incident of the
ancestral myth in which the name occurs, such as the bringing
down of the prerogative by the first incumbent in the beginning
of time. At the proper moment, the singers beat this
out and the audience joins them in singing it. Then the singers
begin to strike rapidly on the floor with double beats, assisted [533]
by the guests who clap their hands in rapid couplets. Out
comes the dancer, resplendent in his head-dress decorated with
weasel skins, and women with the required prerogative begin
to drone. If his prerogative is as a *llaiyākam* or *qi'aqa*, he
proceeds to a place beside the fire and begins to run around it,
sunwise, in short mincing steps, revolving at the same time on
himself. He clasps his hands behind his back and bends down,
then stands upright with palms extended upwards, never
ceasing to move his feet in rapid steps. This type of dance is
far more violent than a *sisaok* one, and the amount of energy
expended by a dancer in his rapid circuits of the fire is tremendous.
Never, even for a moment, are his feet quiet, while
his body twists and bends in an amazing fashion. After two

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[a] Among the supernatural beings, the *nusqwal* is a yearling mountain goat. [776]

556 or three rounds he retires utterly exhausted. The time beaten
575 out for a *nusqwal* or *am'lel·a* dancer is the same. He too comes
535 near the fire and at first dances in the same manner until the
[533] singers in unison bellow out, *Wai··*, "More." With a run
that ends in a crashing leap that seems to shake the floor, the performer takes his position between the fire and one of the side walls and begins to revolve furiously upon himself. His body is bent forward until it seems as if all that prevents him from falling to the floor is his hands clutched together as far as possible behind his back; while his feet move so rapidly that the short mincing steps run into each other. Gradually the beating becomes less violent, only to be followed by another cry of *Wai··*, and another rush and jump that lands the dancer behind the fire. Here he revolves once more in the same furious fashion; the same is repeated on the side of the fire opposite to the place where he first performed, and finally between the fire and the door. *Nusqwal* and *am'lel·a* are the most strenuous of all Bella Coola dances and the performer is glad to retire. He afterwards joins the audience. This dance entails no taboo or restrictions on the dancer.

This terminates the performance of this type of dance at a potlatch, but among the goods distributed are some to validate the name acquired by the dancer, and others to legalize his actual display.

574 The occasion on which importance and solemnity are
575 attached to *a'alk* dances is during potlatches, but they are
535 also given at other times. Most Bella Coola performances
are so steeped in the presence of the supernatural that the element of enjoyment is secondary, but in the spring, after the
[796] end of the *kusiut* season and before the salmon come to the
rivers, dances for pleasure are of common occurrence. A *sisaok* can call his fellows to his house and the singers beat out *sisaok* songs to which the owners dance, but the most common hosts are *a'alk*. Of course an individual may be a member of both societies, but the heralds invite the guests in his *a'alk* name. Those summoned include both members of the society

and those who are not. Any *a'alk*, provided that he has enough 574
food for a meal, can call in his neighbours, but the one who 575
usually does so is a man who has received his name a year or 535
two before the occasion.

A few days before the time selected, the host asks the 575
singers to compose a new song for him. For a *nusqwal* dancer
particularly, and in some cases for any one of the other three 574
divisions of the society, the text does not deal with incidents 535
connected with the host's ancestral story, but with humorous
or disgraceful incidents of the present time. If a man has 533
caught ten salmon and kept them all for himself, his miserliness [626]
is commented upon in the song; if a wife has deserted her husband for another man, the actions of the two are mercilessly ridiculed; if a chief has failed to display generosity it is likewise recorded, and reference is made to errors in dance ritual. To do this is one of the functions of a *nusqwal*, and the singers are always ready to assist him. At the same time they often add a new incident to the tune belonging to some other *a'alk* dancer so that he too will be able to perform. In this way the airs are remembered from year to year, which is different from the customary Bella Coola usage.

On the morning of the day chosen, the host asks one of the [202]
singers to beat a drum repeatedly but slowly, as a signal that
a non-ceremonial dance is about to take place. About noon, [203]
heralds go from house to house announcing who is to give the dance. In the late afternoon the people gather in the donor's house where men, women, and children seat themselves without distinction of rank, the only reserved place being that for the singers behind the fire. They beat out the host's tune and he dances to it, while the singers themselves sing the words to the amusement of the audience. Using their own discretion, they then beat out the tune of another *a'alk* and he also dances, followed in succession by a third, a fourth, and as many as the singers think fit. Sometimes the songs of *susaok* are used in a similar manner. When many have danced, the host distributes food to all his guests, not forgetting to give the largest

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574 presents to the singers and heralds who have rendered assistance.
Instead of dispersing immediately, the guests may remain
535 to gamble or wrestle. Since there is no solemnity attached to
[533] the affair, it is a time for indulgence in amusements of all kinds.
[525 These conclude the chief features of the *a'alk* dances. Probably
they once played an important part in the lives of the
526] Bella Coola, but with the increase in importance of the *sısaok*,
[178] they have decayed into little more than a form of entertainment.

A'alk ORIGIN MYTHS

551 Theoretically, every Bella Coola *a'alk* should be able to
575 record the myth in which his name is embodied, but few can
do so. Of course if a man has been able to validate both
773 ancestral and *a'alk* names from the same myth, that is his
authorization for both. In many cases a myth is split, and the portion containing an *a'alk* appellation is given to some member of the ancestral family, other than the chief able to validate the most important ancestral name. In such a case, the *a'alk* can record little more than that his designation came down with a specified group of the first people. This, for example, is the explanation given by a Kimsquit *nusqwal* for his name *Sınx̣älotła* which came to earth with *Smaoan* (I, p. 332) in the beginning of time. Another Kimsquit *a'alk*, *Ṫłaiyäkam*, whose prerogative is to perform the dance of that name, states that it was brought down by *Sinux̣etł* (I, p. 326), who assumed the designation of *Ṫłaiyăkam* after its performance. This early settler had the additional name of *Wi'tälao*.

539 The two following origin myths were obtained in some detail:

Once,[8] long, long ago, *Älquntäm* came to the conclusion that it was not good for the inhabitants of the world to be afraid of supernatural beings. He decided that the best way to dispel this dread would be to arrange a marriage between his daughter, *Sınxan·a*, and a mortal; so he

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[177] [8] Related by Mrs. Willie Mack. European elements have obviously been incorporated into the first part of this legend, though the narrator considered the whole tale to be ancient.

539 575 to the cave and greeted their long-lost brother affectionately. Though he, too, was delighted at the reunion, he said but little, and for two days told them nothing of his experiences. They remained in camp and on the third night *Älkwi* told his brothers that he had obtained supernatural hunting powers. The following morning the four went out and killed so many mountain goats that the cave was filled with their carcasses. Their good fortune was amazing. *Älkwi* sent one of his brothers to invite to the cave not only the people of Kimsquit but of the whole countryside as well. While he was absent on this errand, the remaining three prepared and smoked the meat, taking care to preserve the leg bones.

Within two weeks the guests began to assemble. *Anokokwläls* was a good place for a ceremony because *Älkwi* had decorated it with paintings after its roof had opened to show him the upper regions of space.[12] When all the people had arrived, the host gave a mountain goat leg-bone to each, asking every recipient to beat time with it. Then *Älkwi* danced
[535] a *nusqwal* dance, imitating the one he had seen done by the goat. After performing, he unfolded the story of his adventures and finished by giving away valuable presents of smoked meat and goat grease. Thus was initiated this particular *nusqwal* dance.

In later years, *Älkwi* had such phenomenal success in hunting that
[551] by distributing the spoil he was able to create and confirm for his youngest brother the name, *Nustakwalämt*, "The One Who is Always Successful." This has since been transmitted from one generation to another. *Älkwi*,
[103] too, is responsible for the name of Mount *Tcopinätl*, "Leg-Bones." On one occasion he killed a large number of mountain goats on the mountain and left their leg-bones, *tcopinätl*, piled together near the spot. He instructed everyone to refer to the mountain by that name, which has since been done.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY

575 578 A few words should be said about the reputed early history of the *a'alk* society. Its members seem always to have been on the best of terms with the *sisaok*, and there is no mention of feuds between these two organizations. On the other hand, there is said to have been constant friction with members of the *kusiut* society.[13] The latter comprises a large number of individuals bound together by the possession of supernatural

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[532] [12] These paintings are said to be still in existence, and the sister of one informant claimed to have seen them.

[13] This point is elaborated in vol. II, chap. 1.

he can. Several of the older people mentioned that early white 556
traders would have received more for their goods by giving 431
them away than by selling.

Even at the present time the Bella Coola sometimes carry
out a practice which was once common. Particularly in the 556
early autumn or in spring, a chief who has large supplies of 648
food may decide to show his wealth to the members of a neigh-
bouring tribe such as the Bella Bella. Alone, or with a few [484]
friends, he goes to a foreign village where he is sure to find accommodation in the home of some friend, relative, or important chief. In the evening he invites the inhabitants of his host's village to the house in which he is staying, and uses the food he has brought with him to provide them with an elaborate meal. His guests now feel it incumbent on them to repay this generosity, and one of them asks the singers to beat out one of his songs, the Bella Bella equivalent to *sisaok*, *a'alk*, or even *kusiut*. The owner dances to it and then gives presents to the stranger to validate the performance he has just witnessed. This is repeated by everyone to whom he has given food, and although each present may be small, their total is greater than the original outlay. Sometimes a poor man, feeling himself too insignificant to give a ceremony of this kind, takes a supply of food to a foreign tribe to sell. If the hosts wish to show their generous dispositions they persuade him to give it away in the fashion just described, which always brings in more than he could obtain by sale. It is even customary for the hosts to lend such a stranger enough food for public distribution if his own stock is too small.

Although the most important Bella Coola dances are per- 533
formed at potlatches or during the *kusiut* season, they are not 535
confined to these periods. Professional singers do nothing else 574
and, except during the run of salmon when everyone is busy fishing, a dance occurs every few nights. Supernatural beings are not called down; consequently there is little solemnity and everyone has a good time. On these occasions, *kusiut* songs are first beaten out, followed by *sisaok* and *a'alk*, and the owner

533 of each song dances to it. Anyone who has enough food to
● 535 provide a meal for all is glad to invite his neighbours to such
an affair, but the singers and heralds can force a stingy man
574 to act as host. Everyone knows his neighbour's resources and
the singers have no hesitation in going to the house of a man
with an ample supply of food and beginning to beat out songs
[203] there. The heralds are quick to see what is happening and
call the people, with the result that the involuntary host is
[626] compelled to provide a meal in order not to be thought mean
and churlish. Without waiting for the singers to take the
[203] initiative, heralds likewise often invite people to the house of
a man whom they know to be well provided with food.

During the summer, the necessity of laying in supplies of
[221] salmon makes it impossible to hold many dances, although one
[796] of the non-sacred type just described takes place whenever
there is a lull in the fishing. In the early autumn, when ber-
556 ries, fish, and game are abundant, the thoughts of chiefs turn
796 to potlatches and the lengthy preliminaries are begun. At this
season, too, a chief who lacks sufficient wealth to invite foreign
[221] guests, calls in his neighbours for a *sısaok* dance and initiates
[575] some of his young relatives into that society. The ritual,
described in the last chapter, resembles that of a potlatch
[535] except that no new house is constructed, there is no return of
a dead relative, and the ceremonial connected with the coming
of foreigners is necessarily omitted. In some cases a chief
performs this type of rite a year before he proposes to hold a
potlatch, and explains that he is doing so because he will be
unable to give presents to the inhabitants of his own village
[426] at the later affair. Gifts so distributed are returnable with
interest, though it is not obligatory for recipients to do this in
time for the donor to make use of their repayment at his
potlatch.

Ceremonials of this nature occupy the Bella Coola during
[575] the early autumn, while in winter *kusiut* dances take place
almost nightly. When they are over, it is time for the non-
[535] sacred variety of *a'alk* performances, and for another type of
rite, nusäxkämx.

rite, *nusäxkämx̣*. This can be described here, since, although ~~005~~
not closely associated with the potlatch, it serves to teach 852
children the principles of present-giving and indebtedness. 867
February is the proper month for *nusäxkämx̣*, although pre- [796]
liminary arrangements are made early in the winter. A chief
who has a son or daughter about ten or twelve years of age [556]
may decide to use some of his food, and a small part of his
wealth, for the benefit of the child. With the assistance of his relatives, the father begins making large numbers of toy canoes, miniature bows and arrows, small baskets, and models of all other types of articles commonly given away at potlatches. The manufacture of these requires several months, but towards the end of January they are nearly ready.

A name must then be chosen for the child. Since a *nusäx-* 553
kämx̣ dance is a humorous, non-sacred affair, a *nusäxkämx̣* 852
name is not embodied in a myth, but is drawn from some story. 867
Occasionally, parents decide on a new one, but more often the
designation selected is one used for the same purpose by a [535]
grandparent of the child. There is no rivalry with regard to names of this type, and one of them can be re-used without asking consent of the last incumbent, although permission would never be refused. There must be a song with each name
and the grandparents and other elderly relatives teach this to 533
a number of boys who are to act as singers. The words may 852
have been remembered from a previous occasion; if not, a 867
simple theme is composed by one of the old people having
some reference to the name about to be conferred. For ex-
ample, one appellation of this type is *Ṫoplwac*, Fawn, and the [551]
accompanying words are:

"We hear that Deer has borne a child."

Another name is *Q̣olon*, Beaver, and the song: "Be of good cheer, the Beaver is coming."

A third song is, "Go outside under the house like a dog."

Occasionally a small incident in an ancestral myth is used. The teaching of the song to the juvenile singers is a source of constant merriment; the parents and grandparents are the

852 principal instructors, aided by the professional musicians.
867 Boys are always willing to act as singers for the practice they
[533] receive, and the gifts they will acquire. Other lads are chosen
to act as heralds, an effort being made in each case to pick
those likely to pursue these professions.

[796] The day finally selected for the ceremony is in February,
on a date when nothing of importance is taking place. The
juvenile heralds summon the child guests, who have been
invited in accordance with the rules governing a potlatch,
especial care being taken to omit none to whom the child donor
is indebted. His father carefully instructs him in this matter,
thus impressing on his son's mind one of the fundamental
points of Bella Coola life. In the late afternoon, when all have
[535] assembled, the boy singers beat out the donor's song and he
dances to it. It may be in the nature of a *sisaok*, *a'alk*, or
kusiut dance, according to the wishes of his parents. In many
cases, one of the grandparents or some other old relative likewise
dances to the song, using whatever style he chooses.
There is no ceremonial significance to the ceremony and all
enjoy themselves immensely, especially the adult guests. After
[553] the dancing, the new name is announced and presents are given
to the guests. The father of the young donor carefully instructs
him as to the scale of his gifts, emphasizing the necessity
of rewarding the singers and heralds, and of repaying with
interest those children from whom he has received favours. In
this way, the ceremony serves as a practical example of how to
conduct a potlatch. The parents of the donor always provide
some tasty food for the occasion, and this is distributed after
[556] the gifts have been handed round. The necessity for food and
presents makes it impossible for any but the children of chiefs
to enjoy this training.

After the ceremony, the children parade up and down the sidewalk in front of the houses, singing boisterously. The performance has been for their benefit and they wish to "show off." One night completes the affair, but the following afternoon another child may summon his comrades to a similar

ceremony. The child singers first beat out the song of the 852
present donor, then that of his predecessor, to which the latter 867
dances once again. If food is plentiful, *nusäxkämx̣* ceremonies
may be carried out every day for several weeks, or a year or [796]
two may elapse without one. A child's song is remembered [533]
from year to year and he dances whenever it is beaten out.
The name acquired in this way is used semi-jocularly by a lad's [535]
comrades. After marriage, it is considered unfitting for a [551]
youth to be concerned with *nusäxkämx̣* and he normally becomes
an *a'alk*. [885]

Ceremonies of this kind have been discontinued for many
years and it was impossible to obtain detailed accounts. The [182]
main features are clear: they served to instruct children in the
methods of present-giving. According to one informant, there
were two types of *nusäxkämx̣* ceremonial; one of the humorous
pattern above described in which, however, food alone
was given away, and another in which miniature presents were
distributed. This man believed that the latter was only possible
for the children of wealthy chiefs, and that on such occasions [556]
the themes consisted of small incidents in the family
myth. In either case, the importance of ceremonial can be
judged from the manner in which it was impressed upon mere
children.

their craft and set out on foot along the overland path to the head of South Bentinck Arm. 539*

Midway along this trail the travellers saw a house, called *Tcākwalotl* because it could lengthen itself at will. From this supernatural sight each of the five became a shaman. This house was a replica of the one above in which mankind was made and, like it, contained many rooms, in each of which lived an individual speaking a different language. *Äl·imʌlsaix* failed to understand them and in his annoyance scattered the speakers, who fled to different parts of the coast where each increased and perpetuated his own language. This is why the various coastal tribes have their own tongues; [829] if *Äl·imʌlsaix* had been able to understand them in *Tcākwalotl* there would be no diversity of speech now.

Various dances were taking place in the rooms within the house. There was a constant din from the large whistles used in *sɩsaok* ceremonial which sounded of their own accord and were continually answered by Echo. Only at this place and at *Nusq̣alst* did Echo appear to the first people; [424] hence only the descendants of *Äl·imʌlsaix* and of the *Nusq̣alst* people have [535] the right to portray him in their dances. *Äno°likwolsaix* (II, p. 8) stood near the door; when at last she called out, the *sɩsaok* whistles became silent as if in fear.

Continuing their journey the travellers reached *Täl·io*, at the head of South Bentinck Arm, where a solitary man, *Nusx̣emda*, was living. At this place *Ṫlakwakilayɛk*^{wa} gave birth to Raven, who was born as a boy with the legs of a raven. *Äl·imʌlsaix* named him *ɩx̣lqotlamsqwaxdjinas*. After a short sojourn at *Täl·io* they ascended the river, and presently *Äl·imʌlsaix* saw a female grizzly bear, whom he also invited to join the party as his sister. The bear accepted and he endeavoured to change the creature to a woman. He had fair success with the paws and face; that is why these parts of a bear are similar to those of men at the present day, but the beast's hairy hide defied his efforts and in disgust he told it to run away. Before banishing it, he bade the animal always show a friendly disposition to human beings, wherefore grizzly bears at *Täl·io* [825] have never been known to attack a person. The party proceeded up the river to Mount *Stap'*, where *Äl·imʌlsaix* found a repository (II, p. 8) through the discovery of which he became a Cannibal with the name *Snʌɩkka°kʊs* and an eagle as incubus.. From this point they returned to *Täl·io*, where they settled permanently.

Many of the names which occur in this myth are still in use. Mrs. 551 Schooner's designation as chief is *Ṫlakwakilayɛk*^{wa}, a name that can be used by either man or woman; in the former case the suffix *yɛk*^{wa} is presents were distributed to validate the name, *Ṫlaiyăkam*, which *Sinux̣ɛll* had chosen for himself. 539*

Sinux̣ɛll married a Bella Bella woman who brought with her the prerogative of a dance with respect to the devil-fish. In Bella Bella this rite was connected both with the *kusiut* and the *sısaok*, but in Kimsquit it was performed only as a *kusiut* dance. It was first given there by *Łulqwan·i*, a relative of *Sinux̣ɛll*, and has since been performed in like fashion in Kimsquit. Their daughter received the Bella Bella name, *X̣ɛlăsu*, which has since remained in Kimsquit. [424] [575] [535] [551]

ORIGIN MYTH OF *Ăx̣ɛl·i*[40]

In the beginning of time there came to *Ăx̣ɛl·i*, on the east side of the Dean River, about one mile from the sea, *Sonxwaăkus* and his three younger brothers. They brought a stone hammer as their present from *Ālquntăm*. After they had lived some time on this earth, *Sonxwaăkus* asked *Yulătimut* to have a canoe ready for him on the morrow. By the next day *Yulătimut* had completed a fine craft. *Sonxwaăkus* was delighted and spent four days fitting it out; then set out with his three younger brothers for a trip to the far north, where he knew by report that abalone-shells were to be found.[41] The four did not know the route and were constantly penetrating into fiords from which there was no exit; however, they persevered and were helped by all whom they encountered, *Sonxwaăkus*'s name being well known. After a month's voyage, they reached their goal. They found themselves before a lofty precipice falling sheer into the ocean with a cavern visible in it at very low tide. This they boldly entered. At first they were deluged with falling star-fish; in fact, their canoe would have been sunk by the weight of these if the youngest brother had not held up his cedar-bark cloak to ward them off. A little farther on they found countless abalone-shells, with which they swiftly filled the canoe, fearing lest the tide should rise sufficiently to prevent their return if they stayed to investigate further. Once safely outside they camped, and the eldest brother took the opportunity to bestow names on the younger brothers for things they had seen or done on the way. He called his second brother *Nuswin·ămx̣*, "The Warrior," as if he had fought against the abalone; the third *Ālus·limăn*, "Falling Star-Fish," and the youngest *Ălusqox*, "The Roof-Maker," a reference to the

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[40] Related by Jim Pollard. Boas (p. 60), has recorded a similar myth from Bella Coola with different characters.

[41] The Bella Coola are emphatic in stating that abalone-shell comes from the north or the east; possibly this may be explained by an indirect trade route. [487]

make a salmon-weir. In accordance with *Ālquntām*'s instruction, 539*
Smaoan planned to make a circuit of the world seeking a suitable place
to settle. He started northward, in eagle form, scattering eagle down, [778]
wherefore this material has ever since been highly regarded and is used
as a symbol of peace. Owing, moreover, to the eagle down scattered on [821].
the mountains, there has always been much snow in that region.[32]

Sometimes as he travelled he assumed the form of the sun, for he was so powerful that nothing was impossible to him. Far in the north *Smaoan* obtained an enormous copper, which he carried back to Kimsquit without completing his original plan of circling the earth. He perched on a tree near his brother's almost completed salmon-weir.

"Why don't you change yourself to a human being?" *Omqomkilıka* inquired.

"I am waiting until our food is more plentiful," *Smaoan* replied. "Besides I have been to the far north where I obtained an enormous copper."

When the weir was completed and *Omqomkilıka* was catching many salmon, his brother at last decided to become a man. But instead of sending his cloak back above he animated it, as an eagle. *Smaoan* now became an ardent fisherman and was much annoyed by the thefts made by the bird, though he himself was responsible for it not having returned to *Nusmāt·a*. After about a year he suggested to *Omqomkilıka* that they should kill it, but the latter demurred, since it was the guise which *Ālquntām* had given *Smaoan*. The latter said nothing, but the next time he saw the eagle stealing his fish he killed the bird, without consulting his brother. No sooner had he done this than he felt sorry, but it was too late; he could not restore the eagle to life.

Owing to the salmon given them by *Ālquntām* the two brothers were now very prosperous, and *Smaoan* began to think of marriage. One day he noticed some chips floating down the Dean River, so he judged that people must be living on that stream. He set out to investigate, met *Yeālos*, and married his sister *Sximāna*, as has been described in a Dean River myth. To celebrate this event the two brothers prepared to invite people from far and near. First they lengthened their house to accommodate a large number; it was of the type known as *tcākwalotl*, though it could not expand without human agency. Then they painted their spoons with designs of the *mātsqus*, since they had brought that creature
with them from above. Now everything was ready and they summoned [424]
their guests. When all had assembled, *Smaoan* gave a *llaiyākam* dance [535]

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[32] The clouds which float over Kimsquit before a west wind are still called "*Smaoan*'s clouds," in memory of his journey. The myth fails to explain how *Smaoan* was responsible for these phenomena.

* 539 to commemorate the killing of the eagle. The text of his song described how he had come to this earth and how he had slain the bird which had [424] been his own cloak. This dance was duly validated by presents of [535] salmon, and has since been carried out by the descendants of *Smaoan*. It is assumed that the concept of such a dance was given to him by *Älquntäm* before he left *Nusmät·a*, but he used his own discretion on this earth as to the actual reason for it.

At this gathering of people, virtually a potlatch, *Smaoan* took for himself the name *Änuq̓plälaix*, "What Fills People." He chose this name with reference to the countless salmon caught in his weir.

Smaoan next travelled to Bella Bella seeking a wife. His fame and wealth were so well known that he was able to wed *ƚläkwaitl*, the daughter of a powerful chief. She had the valued prerogative of wailing, a right which had been duly validated by presents. Her father told her that when she was going with *Smaoan* to Kimsquit she would pass *Yuyulʌmx̣l*, a man who had been turned to stone on the skyline above the western side of Dean Channel, about five miles from its head, and that unless she wailed as she passed him her children would be unable to enjoy this prerogative. The reason for this injunction is not now understood; it is merely recognized that as *Yuyulʌmx̣l* became petrified near *Smaoan*'s home he became, in some manner, a crest. As the canoe bearing *ƚläkwaitl* passed *Yuyulʌmx̣l* she began to wail and weep, nor could her husband soothe her. He, for his part, told the herald, *Nusłliuq*, who had come with him from above, to call out as follows:

"Hello! Crest, our chief has married a Bella Bella woman; as you are his crest, so are you hers."

[484] When *Nusłliuq* had called this a second time the stone man answered. [763] Ever since, passers-by have addressed *Yuyulʌmx̣l*, and a failure on his part to reply is considered an omen of death.

ƚläkwaitl brought her husband several valuable prerogatives, a *sısaok* dance with the large cone-shaped whistles, several *kusiut* dance rights, as well as some dyed cedar-bark. According to one of *Smaoan*'s descendants, this is how the *sısaok* ritual reached Kimsquit. Among the Bella Bella, whales can only be eaten by chiefs, and *Smaoan* received this right from his father-in-law. The latter also gave his son-in-law a dead whale, which was towed behind the canoe towards Kimsquit. *Smaoan* knew that his people would object to it being brought into the river, since there was a firm belief that a whale would drive away the salmon. Accordingly, he beached the carcass in the fiord and there dried the meat in smoke.

Smaoan now determined to give an elaborate potlatch at which he planned to portray his prerogative with regard to the whale. He decided to build his new house of the semi-subterranean type; when it was finished

584 ceived information of the proposed marriage, but they always
plead ignorance, and deliberate for several days. Y's parents
and other relatives take part in the discussion, and Y herself
may likewise be taken into confidence. Although a daughter
has, theoretically, little choice, in practice she exercises a great
[581] deal of influence. Her mother and father weigh the suitor's
eligibility not only with regard to wealth and ancestral possessions,
but consider his character. An immoral young man
is not desirable, though neither is one who is impotent.

If Y's relatives agree to the proposal, some one of them
informs the intermediary, or X's father, and the young people
are considered to be engaged. The fact is supposed to be kept
secret for several days, although the news usually becomes
known sooner. X's relatives as soon as possible take a number
583 of presents to Y's family. These are given in private, and are
584 termed "secret gifts"; they are said to give strength to the
future children. Since no witnesses are present it follows that
no social prestige accrues from the transaction. The relatives
included in the "family" of either X or Y are not always the
same; uncles, aunts, grandparents, may or may not take part
in the giving and receiving of presents, the parents alone always
do so. Sometimes distant relatives take a leading part in the
arrangements, either in hope of receiving valuable gifts, or of
obtaining social influence by lavish giving. If X's relatives
have reason to believe that Y's family will accept their proposal,
several of them may go in company and actually carry
the "secret gifts" to Y's house at the time of making the first
proposal. Should this be rejected, they merely carry away
their goods, and as the affair has been private, no one's vanity
is hurt.

The acceptance of "secret gifts" binds the engagement of
X and Y, but a few days elapse before this is made public. If
556 X's family is wealthy, his father, or other near relative, presently
584 invites all the inhabitants of the village to his house.
•535 The singers, in their usual stations behind the fire, strike up
575 the tune of some *kusiut* and the owner of the song, thus warned,

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dances in time to it. Using their own discretion, the musicians 584
proceed to beat out the time for *kusiut* after *kusiut*, and each
performs. In like fashion they then beat out the tune of one [535]
susaok after another, and each member of that society gives his [575]
dance. Since none of the supernatural beings is present, the affair is non-sacred. The singers consult with the host as to the number of songs to be used. When they stop at last, X's
father, aided by his younger relatives, gives valuable presents [583]
of food. No mention of the coming marriage is made, but the rite gives the donor an opportunity of displaying his generosity as a chief and indirectly increases the importance of the wedding because the value of the food will later be remembered in connection with it.

If X's father is very wealthy, he may recall the people for several nights, always providing the same type of entertainment, and always giving food. He uses his own judgment as to the number of such entertainments, but at that which he decides shall be the last, he announces:

"Tomorrow we shall go to Y's father's house."

If X's father does not wish to give away such large quantities of food he may omit the dancing in his own house and make this announcement at a potlatch, a *kusiut* dance,[3] or any other public gathering. But the more elaborate the ceremonial, the greater is the importance of the marriage in the eyes of the
Bella Coola, which in turn increases the strength of the children [858]
who may result from it.

On the morning after this declaration, X's father calls to 583
his house those whom he wishes to be witnesses of the alliance 584
that has been planned. These include as many of his relatives and those of his wife as he desires, and often intimate friends. These individuals comprise the group interested, on behalf of X, in the marriage; they provide the goods which are given for him, and receive the presents from the corresponding group of Y's relatives. Anyone having the necessary financial ability

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[3] This is probably a recent innovation.

585 In the gathering dusk all assemble in X's house; Y's relatives attend or not as they wish. X's father would feel insulted if anyone else should stay away without a valid excuse, but in point of fact everyone is eager for an evening's entertainment. The singers take their accustomed places behind the fire and the guests arrange themselves in the house without reference to rank. The musicians strike up the *kusiut* song of anyone present, and the person so indicated dances. The first tune used is frequently that of X's father, and then that of his mother, but there is no fixed rule about this. The singers [535] choose and beat out tune after tune, and guest after guest dances, but, since none of the supernatural beings is present, the affair is of a non-sacred nature. After exhausting the most popular *kusiut* songs, the musicians beat out the *sisaok* songs of many of the guests who, in succession, dance to them; the songs of shamans are used in like fashion. Sometimes the singers continue until everyone present has danced, at other times they curtail the ceremony, as they think fit. When they decide to stop, they intimate this to X's father, who superintends the distribution to the guests of whatever kind of food has been provided.

During the meal, a fluent speaker stands up and expounds 537 on behalf of X's father the ancestral myth in which his son's 585 ancestral name is embodied. Sometimes X's father acts as his own orator, but usually a herald is called upon. Only sufficient [203] details are given to show the importance of X. The myth may either be one of the most ancient type dealing with the first settlement of this earth, or one of later date describing the exploits of X's famous ancestors; but in either case, as shown by the examples given in the last chapter, each contains an account of a marriage. It is always known, although not generally described, that at each of these several dancers performed, their number varying between two and eighteen. The orator, when outlining the myth, stresses this part of it, and always announces how many danced at that time; with the statement that there will be a like number on the morrow. In the same manner the fluent speaker outlines a myth belonging 537 to the ancestral family of X's mother, again with emphasis on 585 the dancers used by her ancestors. X, as a member of both ancestral families, can combine his rights from both sides, but it is customary for him to use no more than five or six performers. Should X have no claim to this privilege from either mother or father, an almost unthinkable situation, he is able [426] to borrow the prerogative of using some from friends. The sentiment on which this oration of myths is based is the one so often mentioned; it marks the close relationship between the future children and their noble ancestors of old, a source of strength to the former.

X's father now names those whom he wishes to assist him 585 on the following day. These are the dancers, who are chosen [595] primarily for their skill in dancing, and secondarily in accordance with their rank. With them he selects a number of persons to stand near and help or "cherish" them as they perform. He also asks the services of some of the women who are professional droners; of the keeper of the marriage song of his [614] ancestral family; and, finally, of a number of men to sit near the singers and assist them with suggestions. It would be most exceptional for anyone so called upon to decline the honour. It is near morning by this time and the guests depart.

On the following morning, the actual wedding day, X's father calls to his house those selected the previous evening as dancers and their assistants. The former wear blankets decorated with small copper ornaments[6] and carry circular wooden [534] rattles provided with handles. Their clothing and rattles may be their own, but if they do not possess suitable attire, it is incumbent on X's father to provide them. Skins are piled up within the house, and some of these are said to "make soft the

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[6] At the present time there is uncertainty as to the proper clothing of a marriage dancer. Several informants stated that it was a copper-decorated blanket, whereas others said that there was no special attire; one man claimed that an attempt was made to imitate the form and costume of X's first ancestor, and another that animal costume was used. Probably there was no uniformity in custom. [292] [535] [184]

585 handles of the rattles"; symbolising that they are pads to protect the hands, though the dancers derive no benefit from the pelts, which are stacked with others for later distribution to Y's family. A large amount of provisions has been prepared and placed in boxes, one for each member of Y's family. In many cases it is difficult to estimate how much food will be required, and if there is a surplus, it is eaten by the performers and other assistants.

When all are ready they rush forth; dancers, dancers' assistants, and young relatives of X, followed more closely by his father. The rest of the villagers watch with interest, but do not take part in the ceremony. Choosing a position outside Y's house, the singers beat the time of the marriage [533] song used by X's ancestors; if the words are known they sing [424] them. Like the prerogative of marriage dancers, there may not be a marriage song embodied in every origin myth, but if [426] X lacks such he is usually able to borrow one.* The keeper of the song is stationed near the singers, ready to help them with the words or the tune, if necessary. Meanwhile the [585] dancers are performing on the sidewalk outside Y's house. Each uses whatever type of dance he chooses, *kusiut*, *sisauk*, *a'alk*, or even shaman's, but all dance simultaneously, though without paying greater attention to each other than is [533] necessary to avoid collisions. The professional drummers accompany the singing with their high-pitched quaver.

Meanwhile Y's father, surrounded by his relatives and friends, waits in readiness within their house. Y herself is

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[214] *The reputed origin of marriage songs has been described in vol. I, chap. [illegible]. They are less strongly preserved as prerogatives than most elements of origin myths; in fact some keepers of the songs are willing to perform at any wedding, although this may be a modern development. The keeper, either man or woman, is chosen by the senior members of the ancestral family, after discussion with the singers. It is his duty to remember text and tune, and the only pecuniary advantage is from the presents made by those to whom he teaches it. Some songs have words, others only a tune. The text of a song brought down by *[illegible]* to [illegible] is:

"Hello, [illegible]! We do as we have done before. Please make good the path for those who are about to marry."

[illegible] obtained this song from his heavenly comrades and used it at his own marriage, as his male descendants have since done.

ciety. These are given several times, serving to recall the 533
ceremonies in which the chief took part during his life. At 575
intervals, the new song is repeated and *sisauk* members of the 766
audience join in as they become familiar with the words. Frequently one or more relatives of the deceased dance in his [535]
stead during the singing. The details of this rite, especially of the songs used at it, differ considerably according to the actions of the person during life; if a mighty chief, the donor of many potlatches, this fact is described in the song, whereas only an incident from the ancestral myth can be used for a *young sisauk. If some of his female relatives are professional* [761]
wailers, they function during the ceremony. In all circumstances, the rite aims to comfort the grieving kinsmen, an end which it usually achieves.

As already described, *sisauk* ceremonial was in a state of 575
transition at the time of the coming of the white man. Pre- 766
vious to that date, a spectacular funeral prerogative had been 177
adopted from Rivers Inlet,[4] which has since been claimed by a 424
number of *sisauk*. All the Bella Coola know of this ceremony, [178]
and most of them desire to perform it at the death of a dearly loved relative; at the present time this is possible owing to the slight regard paid to prerogatives, but it is certain that a few years ago it would have been forbidden to most people, and that it was never a universal Bella Coola rite.

When this rite is performed, the corpse is allowed to remain 575
in its coffin for at least one night after the day on which 766
Melakila came and the *sisauk* songs were sung. Meanwhile 532
the carpenters have prepared an imitation body, usually of rags on a light framework, and a wooden representation of the deceased's crest. Since this figure is to come through the roof and carry aloft the corpse, stout hooks are attached to its feet. In theory, the bird or animal disguise used by the first ancestor

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[4] One old Bella Coola stated that this prerogative was obtained during his own life-time from a Rivers Inlet chief who moved to Talio. It is impossible to state accurately when this ritual was adopted by the Bella Coola, though it is unquestionably of recent origin.

a 556 769 [537] will now be the forms of the one who has recently died. As soon as all have taken their places, an eloquent chief whose aid has been requested for the purpose stands up and recounts the donor's ancestral myth in some detail, mentioning the source and meaning of the mourners' marks and the designs of the totem-poles. Then he continues to the effect that the chief will "cry" by relating the history of his ancestors, which is also the history of the journey taken by his kinsman, and that [195] *this recital will shore him* up. The word used for this, *snanlánkw*, is the one commonly employed for raising a heavy burden with the aid of a lever. Then the singers begin to beat [533] out the first of the mourning songs, accompanying it with their voices and assisted by as many of the audience as are familiar with words and tune. Every effort is made to make the singing as impressive as possible to add dignity to the recital of the journey taken by the person who is being commemorated. The guests listen attentively and are suitably impressed by the ancestral history of the donor and his family. All the songs that have been prepared are sung in succession in the same [535] manner. The lack of dancing distinguishes this type of ceremony from all others and adds somewhat to its impressiveness.

[424] [425] After the last song is the proper time for validating young relatives of the donor as mourners. One of the miniature totem-poles, which are light enough to be carried in the hands, is brought from the back-room and given to the boy on whom this prerogative is being conferred. An eloquent speaker explains the meanings of the designs so displayed and enough of the family's ancestral history to make clear whence, and how, they were obtained. The singers begin to beat time slowly, and the youth endeavours to keep time with his feet, while he continues to hold the pole.

[537] Meanwhile the donor and his immediate relatives have been arranging the piles of presents with the inevitable counting and re-counting. As at a potlatch, a fluent speaker is commissioned to hold up the objects, state whence they have been obtained,

a [i.e. - the memorial potlatch - Analyst]

969 expression animated, and, except for his dirty European clothing,
he looked and acted like a religious dignitary taking part
+556 in an important ceremony, as was indeed the case. While he
was speaking there came from without eerie notes of the large,
cone-shaped whistles, combined with the yelping scream of an
eagle. The effect, even on an audience which knew that these
sounds were of human origin, was tremendous. Men and
women stiffened in their seats and craned their necks to see
what was taking place near the door. A number of the younger
969 men had slipped away during Reuben's singing to help the
+556 masked dancer with his disguise. As some of these assistants
•535 continued to blow their whistles, others held up blankets to
conceal the necessarily clumsy entrance of the performer
through the narrow doorway.

These were dropped after a moment, and out into the centre
of the open hall bounded a figure covered with a large white
sheet so that only his bare feet were visible. On his head was
[532] an eagle mask, from the upper part of his back projected a
blackfish, while the head of a raven peered forth from his chest.
The dancer, Timothy Snow, who had been chosen for his skill in such matters, leapt forward in a crouching attitude and took a few short, mincing steps as if he were a gigantic eagle hopping on the ground. At once the older Bella Coola women began to drone out, "*i* . . . . .," and continued as long as the performer remained in the hall. He bent down and turned slowly, sunwise, with arms pressed close to his body and neck contracted, then straightened, and took a few more mincing steps, followed by another turn. In this way he moved in a wide, sunwise circle around the hall, avoiding the middle where there would have been a fire in one of the old-fashioned houses. At intervals he raised himself on his toes and slightly spread his arms beneath the sheet, at the same time looking up so that it appeared as if the eagle were rising to gaze at an object in the distance as a sitting bird does so frequently. This brought the raven mask into plain sight. After a survey of this kind, he bent down and ran a few yards more. Alec Davis and two other *sisaok* fol-

lowed the actor, blowing eagle down over him repeatedly. After 769
one circuit of the hall, the performer passed out through the 556*
front door, from the vicinity of which was heard once more the 535●
large whistles and the screaming of the eagle, both growing less distinct as if the bird were flying away.

The wearer of the mask displayed considerable dramatic talent and succeeded in giving a realistic display in spite of the glaring lights which exposed his bare feet and betrayed the human handicraft of the mask in a manner impossible in the native type of house with a single, central fire as the sole illumination. The Carriers had watched the performance with 769
interest, probably tinged with contempt, but to the Bella
Coola it was no mere spectacle, it was a religious rite of the 556*
highest importance. All the spectators realized that the figure was human, but this seemed inconsequential as they gazed upon the representation of the dead woman in the form of her crests, to which they believed she had been transformed by death. Even the children were silent, and the only sound during the passage was the wailing of a sleepy infant. The 769
eagle crest belonged to Jessie by virtue of membership in the
ancestral family descended from her father's first ancestor, 556*
traced patrilineally, who had come to earth at *Tcımotl* in the 424
form of this bird. The blackfish was a crest acquired through 178
her mother; the raven represented a copper raven belonging to an ancestral myth of the dying grandchild. In former times, carpenters would have worked for weeks preparing an elaborate composite figure, but Captain Schooner wished no delay in the ceremony for fear of police interference, so that it was necessary to use what masks happened to be in existence and to place them in conjunction by means of the crude white sheet. Jessie had not been initiated into the *sısaok* society, [575
but no opposition was raised to the use of *sısaok* whistles both 622]
on account of her status as chief, and owing to the influence of her father who, a *numitl* chief, feared no restrictions and heeded no conventions. Besides, both her brothers were influ-

*787 [535 [781 Dances portraying supernatural beings, carried out with full vigour until a few years ago, further fostered belief in them among participants and uninitiated alike. Consequently, many of the young and middle-aged men claim to have seen visions similar to those of their elders. The incident already described (I, p. 30) of the stump which was thought to be a grizzly bear is a case in point. On another occasion a young man mentioned casually that a few evenings before he had seen a headless man walking along the road and that, wishing to view the monstrosity more clearly, he had tried unsuccessfully to strike a match. The reason was obvious to him; the power of the supernatural visitor prevented the match from lighting. The man, who was undoubtedly convinced of the apparition, may have seen something, perhaps a whorl of fog, somewhat resembling a headless body. A white man would have considered such a sight impossible and absurd, whereas the Bella Coola felt little surprise at the appearance of such a creature and promptly accepted it for what it seemed to be. [154]

[828] Mental activities as well as optical illusions are likewise ascribed to supernatural agency. These include profound agitations of the mind, and even what a white man would consider a passing thought. For instance, one morning when about to start work, a certain man stated that he would have good fortune during the day, that a dream had foretold it. At the time he was moving to a new house and needed help to shift a heavy stove. During the course of the day a number of white men happened to pass by and stopped to speak to him; the stove was mentioned, they offered to move it for him, and did so easily and quickly.

"There you are," said the man, "I told you I was going to have good fortune today."

On another occasion the same man claimed to have felt that misfortune had happened to him and soon learnt that one of his sons had been arrested on a charge of drunkenness and disorderly conduct. The man affirmed that he had this premonition before being aware of its cause.

occupants of the canoe, heard a roaring noise and saw a fish- 787 * weir, similar to those used by the Bella Coola, stretching across 539 Burke Channel, which is about a mile and a half wide at this point. They went close to the beach and a brave man cut a passage through the obstacle. A similar trap was once seen stretching across South Bentinck Arm.

An unusual apparition may be regarded as an omen of 787 * death. For example, not many years ago a young half-breed 763 saw a motor-boat moored to the bank of North Bentinck Arm with an eagle seated in the stern. He ran his own motor-boat towards it, but as he approached the eagle became a man. Then as he drew still nearer, never taking his eyes off the other boat, it, with its occupant, sank beneath the water, without leaving so much as a ripple. On relating the incident to his father, the latter recognized it as an omen of death. Six [811] months later the half-breed's sister died, thus confirming her father's prognostication.

Supernatural Aid Granted to the Unfortunate

Experiences such as have been cited in the last section are 787 * regarded as of possible, and not infrequent occurrence at the present time. On the other hand, supernatural aid granted to 538 those in misfortune, though it is the theme of many stories, is not considered as likely to happen now. The Bella Coola believe the narratives to be chronicles of actual events, and base their conceptions of many supernatural beings on their characteristics as therein described. There is no ceremonial significance attached to any of these stories; they may be, and are told by anyone, frequently for entertainment. Unquestionably, [869] there is a feeling that the moral brought out in such tales is of value in educating the young people, though this point is never emphasized.

Supernatural aid granted to an unfortunate person is 787 * termed *uxlokwaladjut*. Power so obtained cannot be transmitted by the recipient, although memory of the experience is [575] [535]

* 787 occasionally preserved as the theme of a *sɩsaok* dance. The
[575 term is also somewhat loosely applied to any instance of super-
natural help. The reason for the receipt of power is often
[535 attributed to the strong supernatural elements of the favoured
[785 one, or to his having made himself agreeable to supernatural
beings by the observance of ceremonial chastity or other pro-
pitiatory means. A few individuals assert that there is a
tendency for supernatural aid to follow certain ancestral fami-
lies, but such a belief is not general.

539 The following story is typical of the kind of assistance
* 787 granted although no clear picture can be presented except
through the native medium—a number of different tales, such
as are given in the following chapter.

THE GOOD FORTUNE OF *'Yeāxdji*

Not long after the earth was first populated there were living at *Q̣wiyai*, near Namu, two Bella Bella men, *Qomo'sala* and *Ḳălkɩm*, with their wives, relatives, and slaves. *Qomo'sala*'s son, *'Yẹăxdji*, fell a victim to the virulent disease, *llokulx̣*, which causes the face of the sufferer to swell and his flesh to rot. When the case appeared hopeless, his father called his herald to tell the people to abandon *Q̣wiyai*, and to leave the dying youth alone. Accordingly they removed the planks from the houses, packed them on canoes with all the food and clothing from the village and went away, leaving the unfortunate *'Yeăxdji* alone in his misery. Only an old slave woman took pity on him; before she left she hid some glowing embers with frayed cedar-bark in a large clam-shell and told him where to find them.

'Yeăxdji wept bitterly when his relatives departed, but presently he dried his tears and set about making the best of his position. He unearthed the clam-shell and blew the embers into a fire. Next he made a hammer with which he built a rude shelter. A diet of clams at first satisfied him, but before long he made a hook in hopes of catching some trout. He went up the river to a suitable spot, dropped in his baited hook and almost immediately felt a bite. He hauled up his line eagerly, but it was only a worthless bull-head. Angrily he pulled out the hook and threw the fish back into the water. Almost immediately there was a bite, again he drew up his line only to find as before that it was a bull-head, which he hurled back into the river. This happened twice more, until, discouraged at landing only four useless fish, he wrapped his head

755 not do so, he would cease to be a shaman, and the ability would
pass to the cured person.

*756 (3) In more difficult cases the shaman uses his basin and
seeks assistance from others by a frenzied beating of sticks.
He sends some young man out to fill the receptacle at the river,
sets it near the patient, and throws water over him as he kneads
in the manner already described. While this is going on, and
533 it is often a lengthy performance, another shaman, or someone
535 accustomed to lead the singers, ranges the bystanders into two
755 rows, facing each other between the door and the central fire.
Each is provided with a beating stick such as the singers use,
and a sounding-board is placed before each row. The clever
dancer who has been commissioned to lead the orchestra of
stick-beaters stands near the door and the musicians take their
time from his movements. First he slowly raises both arms
and all beat time softly, then, as he lifts his arms higher, the
noise increases, and he sways from side to side as if carried
away by the music; as he does so the men towards whom he
leans intensify their beating, while those on the other side
decrease. Back and forth he sways followed by the beating;
nearing the climax he treads mincingly, whereat the noise rises
to thunder-pitch, then jumps twice, and as he strikes the
ground the drums beat and all the sticks come down with a
final ear-splitting crash. Throughout the whole the women
drone *i*.........., This elaborate beating of time is repeated
four times, on each occasion concluding with the double jump
which calls forth the double thunder of drums and sticks.

755 Meanwhile the functioning shaman is gurgling and chat-
*756 tering through half-closed lips, and at intervals the leader, or
any stick-beater, shouts *hoip*, a call which is supposed to
soothe the supernatural beings. The din is tremendous. No
explanation could be found of the meaning of this noise.

"It has always been done," say the Bella Coola, and they theorize no further.

At last the shaman rises from the sick person, holding his hands carefully cupped together as if he held something within

them that might escape. It is the sickness! The din increases; 755
the leader works himself into a frenzy with his rapid gyrations, 756 *
then he stills the noise as the shaman goes to the door. In [535] ●
dead silence, the more striking in contrast to the previous
tumult, he partly opens his hands and puffs against them, as
if blowing something out of the door, at the same time calling
out, *hoip̣*. Again the beating of sticks breaks out, again it
is stilled, and again the shaman blows forth the sickness. This
is done four times. The shaman uses his own discretion
whether to send the sickness through the door or the smoke-vent.

A variant of this method is for the functioning shaman to
dance during the beating of sticks, before throwing himself on [535]
the patient. With chattering teeth and shaking rattle, he
revolves sunwise, his free arm bent at the elbow so that his
wrist, which he shakes freely, is close to his chin; at intervals
he calls out, *snuaixwa*. It is a serious and important proceeding
to the Bella Coola, and the effects are considered nullified
if a dog barks during the stick-beating.

(4) Some powerful shamans cure by the use of dyed and [824]
undyed cedar-bark. A roll made of these two substances is
placed among glowing embers until it is itself afire, when the [535]
shaman puts it in his mouth. After dancing for some time to
the accompaniment of frenzied stick-beating, he hauls forth
the bark, still burning, and again puts it in the fire. This is
done four times. Then he thrusts the burning bark into the
patient's mouth, and leaves it there for some time before pulling
it forth. This, too, is repeated four times. When finally drawn
forth, it has attracted the sickness, which can then be thrown
away by the throwing away of the bark. It seems clear that
this must be done by conjuring, but the writer was unable to
learn the method employed, and was repeatedly assured that
no subterfuge was used.

(5) One illness is caused by a person carelessly stepping on [753]
a dead salmon, such as dot the banks of the rivers in the [825]
autumn. The fish, indignant, injects a sickness into the
offender.

*756 to make known to all that there will be a dance on the following
556 day, using the name of the shaman. After such announcement,
[203] it would be most unusual for anyone to think of leaving a village until after the performance.

Towards dusk on the appointed day the people are summoned to the house of the shaman. Near the door are seated those who are not initiated *kukusiut*; in the inner part of the house are members of the society, with the singers in their
533 accustomed places behind the fire. The shaman stands alone
● 535 between the fire and the door and sings one of his songs, the time being marked by the words alone. Then he dances, his
*756 wrists shaking, his head rolling from side to side, and his feet
556 marking time to the beating of sticks, as the singers accompany the singing of his song. If more than one song has been composed he dances to each, always accompanied by other shamans and by them alone. The shaman's costume consists of
[292] the usual blanket, and eagle down is scattered in his hair, with the additional and distinctive mark of intertwined dyed, and undyed, cedar-bark. After every song, the singers beat time very rapidly,[7] too rapidly for the dancer to keep pace with it, so he merely sways backwards and forwards shaking his hands violently. Then the shaman, assisted by a few friends whom
*756 he has chosen for the purpose, performs a conjuring feat to
556 impress the uninitiated. The *kukusiut* realize that this may be merely a deception, but since real shamans perform something of the same nature, there is always the possibility that it may be genuine. The shaman may choose some feat which he has seen some old shaman perform, or he may use something which he has seen in a dream; or rely purely on his own inventive ability, aided, as he always is, by carpenters. The method of carrying out each trick is carefully guarded, with the result that it was impossible to obtain information about more than a few. After the conjuring act, the shaman gives food to all, followed by presents. If it is the first time that he has given

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[7] This fast beating of time is called *alal*; it occurs only in shaman and *sisauk* dances.

such a ceremony, that is, if he is validating his name, the gifts 756 *
must be valuable. On later occasions, irrespective of whether 556
it is the same trick or another that is performed, the presents
will be of small value. Goods so given are not returnable.
After dancing, a shaman wears his collar of dyed and undyed [292]
cedar-bark all summer, in fact until he rids himself of his
supernatural endowment by the performance of a *kusiut* rite
the following winter.

Thus there is close inter-dependence of shaman and *kusiut* [575]
dances. On any later occasion, at a ceremony when songs of
all types are being sung, if the singers beat out the tunes of [533]
those used at the ritual just described, the shaman dances to [535] ●
them. This is said to "cure" him, as if the power within him
was a source of danger.

The following are examples of the conjuring tricks per- 756 *
formed, most of them done by the shaman *Ninitsamlaix*, a 789
relative of an informant, who was able to learn the methods
employed.

On one occasion *Ninitsamlaix* prepared two boxes, apparently the ordinary wooden sort used for cooking; across each he arranged a diagonal cross-piece so that the receptacle contained two watertight compartments. Previous to the performance, *Ninitsamlaix* poured water, dyed red with the bark of the alder, into one section of one of the boxes, and put eagle down in one of the compartments of the other. When the time came to carry out the rite he asked an accomplice, another shaman, to bring some water and pour it into his box. This was done, the assistant taking care to put it into the empty half, not into that which contained the dyed water. *Ninitsamlaix* shook the box and poured out some of the liquid to prove that it really was water, and then drank. The spectators, unaware of the cross-piece, did not notice that he did so from the corner opposite to that from which he had poured the water. He had, of course, drunk the dyed fluid. *Ninitsamlaix* cried out that what he had swallowed was paining him, and proceeded to vomit the red water, much to the surprise of the

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shaman pours the grease on the central fire, and throws on it 755
also the figures and some dried salmon. Thus propitiated, it 782
is believed that the dead will be more likely to allow the sickness
to be sucked forth.

Shamans from the dead perform conjuring feats and 756 *
dramatic performances of the same type as ordinary shamans. 556
Until he gives his first dance a newly created shaman is known
as a *lsux*, the same word that is used for a *kusiut* initiate, and [575]
during this period he wears the shaman's collar of intertwined
dyed and undyed cedar-bark. If he is wealthy and influential,
a shaman will repeat his dance every fourth year. Such a performance [796]
can be held at any season, although the usual time is
after the *kusiut* ceremonies. The dramatic representations are
of scenes witnessed in the land below, though sometimes they
are done in a reverse manner, following the practice of the dead
in doing things strangely. Thus one shaman reported that the
ghosts wore very long blankets, but when he danced he wore
one that came only to his hips. The method of singing is the
same as that employed by ordinary shamans, but one whose [535]
power is derived from the dead dances with head bent downwards,
his free hand pointing to the ground with first finger
extended. Also his cry of "*xwai, xwai, xwai,*" uttered at intervals
with a deep cadence, differs from that used by ordinary
shamans. A dance always terminates with the distribution of
food to validate the ceremony.

Like ordinary shamans, those from the dead cannot transmit 756 *
their power. At death their songs too are lost, unless they 533
choose to give them to a friend who is also a shaman from the
dead. This is obviously contrary to the theoretical belief that [428]
all songs have been obtained during revelations, but is not at
all contrary to the Bella Coola practice of having the singers
assist the visionaries in "remembering" their visions.

The following tale, although drawn from the distant past, 539
is a typical illustration of one of the many ways in which 756 *
shamanistic power is received from the dead.[a] 775

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[a] A few stories of similar type have been included in vol. I, chap. VIII to explain the life of the dead, and others are grouped together in the next chapter.

2: McIlwraith NE6 Bellacoola NE6
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/For a discussion and description of the winter ceremonial dances see category 796./

CHAPTER I

WINTER CEREMONIAL DANCES 000

General Observations on the Kusiut Society — Powers and Functions of the Society — Initiation — The Ritual of Specific Dances — Various Origin Myths — Kusiut Prerogatives Other than Dances — The Death of a Kusiut — The Final Rite — Concluding Observations and History.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE *Kusiut* SOCIETY

IN view of the importance of the *kusiut* society in the lives 575*
of the Bella Coola, it would seem logical to have described
it in an earlier part of this monograph. Though an integral
part of the complicated structure of social organization, it is a
secret, semi-religious grouping which can best be treated
separately. The word *kusiut* is connected etymologically, according 575*
to native belief, with *siut*, the term for a supernatural being. 192
Thus the meaning of the society's designation is "The Supernatural," [776]
or "The Learned," for *siut* has both these
significations. A member of the society is likewise called a *kusiut*,
plural, *kukusiut*.

The investigator soon learns of the existence of the society. 551
If he asks a man his name, and then inquires further what type
of designation it is, the answer is always that it is his *kusiut* 575*
name, that is, the one by which he is known as a member of [124]
the society. Ancestral names are used only at potlatches or
other ceremonial occasions, whereas an individual's *kusiut*
appellation is the one which he uses commonly. Moreover, for 535 ●
about three months of every year the Bella Coola live in an 575*
atmosphere of *kusiut* dances with a performance, or its
preliminaries, taking place almost every night. Preparations for 796
this ceremonial season, for so it may be termed, begin four days
after the September moon is full, while the actual dances
commence early in November and are continued until March.
During this period the *kukusiut* are believed to be in intimate [787]

535 contact with supernatural beings, so that it is a time for grave *575 thoughts and decorous behaviour. Even by day the members 796 pass from house to house with dignified mien, not loitering [787] around the sidewalks nor indulging in frivolity. Every effort is made to prevent quarrels between members who are expected to show by their appearance and actions the gravity of the rites in which they are engaged. Night after night they assemble at the house wherein the dance is taking place; those who have performed, and are therefore most closely in touch with the supernatural, even sleep there, not returning to their own houses until March. A dance usually lasts four nights, and during that time the performer's house, in which it takes place, is termed a *nuqpik*, "An Empty House." The significance of this designation is unknown.

178 Membership in the society depends on a duly validated *575 ancestral prerogative to perform one of the many *kusiut* dances. At the present time every Bella Coola is a *kusiut*, even babes [424] in arms being initiated, but formerly no one was admitted until he or she had reached an age of discretion. Some informants went so far as to say that the hair of an initiate must have begun to turn grey, and all agreed that no one was ever admitted until at least twenty, or more often, twenty-five years of age. Initiates were frequently still older; one woman, for example, stated that her mother was past the age of child-[551] bearing before admission. Since only a member of the society could be called by a *kusiut* name, the uninitiated continued to be known by the ancestral names conferred on them at infancy until they received *kusiut* designations. The importance of the 178 society depends on the belief of the uninitiated in the super-*575 natural powers of its members, and as there are now none to 796 impress, the rites carried out today are little more than pic-128 tures of what took place years ago. It is the aim of the Bella Coola to carry out the dances as if uninitiated persons were in attendance, and since most of the following information was obtained from men who well remembered their sensations when not members of the society, it is justifiable to use the present

*575 *Ālquntām* enters and confers on *kusiut* matters with
787 *Sexsexḳālaix*, his assistant in affairs connected with his func-
tions as leader of the supernatural *kukusiut*.[1] This being acts
776 as announcer and intermediary with *Ālquntām*, but himself
796 lacks the power of initiating matters. The two discuss whether
or not it is advisable to allow mortal *kukusiut* to perform certain dances of the type known as *kusiotem* (II, p.128), and if so, they transmit the necessary power to the earthly dancer who has the proper prerogative, thus enabling him to give a graphic representation of what is done in the upper land.

*575 This is the essence of the *kusiut* dances. Each portrays a
performance given by one of the supernatural beings in the
796 house above, or some other aspect of his activities. Each
787 earthly dancer has as patron a supernatural being, usually the
776 one who carries out the dance of which his own is a model, and
between patron and protégé there exists a relationship by
●535 means of which the latter receives the power necessary to perform. To do so, the uninitiated believe that he must receive a *yeux*, which can be translated as "call," from his associate above. Moreover, not only is each patron a supernatural being, but each is guided by *Ālquntām* in the performance of the *kusiut* rites in the land above, which indirectly increases the prestige of the protégé.

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*575 [1] The differences of belief of individual Bella Coola, dependent upon family
traditions, is nowhere shown with greater clearness than in this meeting of the
787 leaders of the supernatural dancers. It is clear that the Bella Coola have no
uniformity of belief, even in what might be regarded as fundamental concepts.
776 One informant, well versed in *kusiut* matters, asserted that there are five super-
796 natural leaders, *Ālquntām* and his assistants, *Smaiaikila*, *Sexsexḳālaix*, *Snusḷkāls*,
and *Sinxālotla*. Others were equally emphatic that *Ālquntām* is the *kusiut*
184 name of the supreme deity, and that *Sinxālotla*, *Smaiaikila*, and *Snusḷkāls*, are
merely other designations for the same deity with regard to different functions.
This belief has been followed during the monograph, by designating the supreme deity
as *Ālquntām*, the name by which he is termed with respect to his *kusiut* powers.
These two opinions are not as basically different as appears at first sight. A man
[828] is considered as having two, or more, personalities with respect to different rites
at which he is called by different names. Since the supreme deity is regarded as a superman, who functions in diverse manners, it is not difficult to understand how these are sometimes ascribed to different individuals, and sometimes to the one under different names.

though the cost of validating such a prerogative is less than a 575*
potlatch, yet a Cannibal dance, for example, entails consider- 424
able expenditure, so a man entitled to give such a ceremony 425
frequently lends his right to another, or it may lie dormant for
generations. Like other loaned prerogatives, failure to return 553
is a frequent cause of feud. A man frequently gives away a [556]
kusiut name-prerogative, and if he should give away all of [578]
them, he becomes legally an uninitiated. In such a case it is
customary for his wife, or some relative, to give him a new [426]
kusiut prerogative, as is likewise the case when a master causes
a slave to be initiated. A name is sometimes given to a person
who resembles a deceased relative of the donor.

(2) *A Patron, omätuts.* Little need be said on this point. 575*
The words of the songs used by the dancer often describe his 424
patron, always couched in mystical terms for the benefit of 776
the uninitiated. If the supernatural associate performs any
type of dance at the gathering above, so can his protégé per- [533]
form on this earth, otherwise his power is limited to singing [535]
of the being. If an individual inherits prerogatives with the
same patron from two different relatives, he can merge these
to give a composite dance, with consequent additional power.
Greedy individuals sometimes illegally add features to which [578]
they are not entitled, a cause of bitter feelings. Or one indi-
vidual may own several prerogatives with different patrons.
Although most *kukusiut* have only one, yet two or three are
not uncommon and one case is known of a man with six distinct patrons. The uninitiated believe that from any one of
these may come the call giving him the power to perform.

(3) *A Repository.* In this subterranean shelter his name 575*
remains, guarded by *Äno*ˀ*likwolsaix*. An individual with sev- 424
eral prerogatives has a repository for each. 778

Although the *kukusiut* are aware that much of their ritual [773]
is deception, it is clear that they believe in the supernatural
origin of their rites, and that their ancestors actually had the [781]
abilities which their descendants of today imitate. In time

[Kusiut Society Initiation]

The following morning the *kukusiut* alone are invited to X's 575*
house. The marshals meanwhile superintend the laying and 796
lashing of planks across two river dug-outs to form a dancing
platform. On this the singers take their places, in addition to [535]
as many *kukusiut* as can scramble aboard. The craft is slowly
poled either up- or downstream, according to the direction of
X's repository, and more *kukusiut* accompany it along the bank;
the uninitiated watch with keen interest from the background.
X and his companions proceed towards the river and on
meeting the lashed-together canoes are taken aboard. The
singers strike up any well known *kusiut* tune, and in time to
it as many *kukusiut* as possible dance on the platform sur- [535
mounting the craft. Each uses his own style of dancing ac- 424]
cording to his prerogative, so that the scene is strikingly varied
and animated. X himself cowers in the centre, practically
concealed from the uninitiated by the dancers. On reaching
the village the whole party hurriedly runs to X's house, from
which the uninitiated are rigorously barred for the rest of the
day. Those *kukusiut* who accompanied the party along the
bank of the river have preceded them and, as X enters, the [201]
droning cry is raised which always heralds the appearance of
one who has been in close contact with supernatural beings.

If X is considered trustworthy, he may be allowed to go
alone to his repository, although this is only customary when
he takes a second or third prerogative. If this procedure has
been followed, X tells those present what he has seen; other-
wise his companions do so. The uninitiated listen eagerly
from the adjacent houses, wondering anxiously what is taking
place. Several *kukusiut* blow, or use bellow-whistles to in-
crease the awe of the hearers. Presently a herald is sent out. 575*
He goes first to the lowest house[16] of the village, then in suc- 203
cession to those above, announcing in each that:

"Something strange has happened to the son of the chief." 796

X's name is not mentioned; if his father is not a chief the

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[16] That is, to the one farthest downstream. By always going to each house in order from bottom to top of the village the herald avoids any danger of omissions.

[Kusiut Society Initiation]

prohibitions that last not *for* one year, but *for* four. X is not 575*
subject to any other restraints. *If* he wishes to go hunting 784
he can remove his cedar-bark collar and hang it *for* conveni- [524]
ence in the forest near his village, redonning it on his return.
The *kukusiut* show considerable interest in their new member, [525]
not only by warning him what he must not do, but by teaching
him how to dance and to growl or make other of the necessary,
but unusual, noises. During the remainder of the ceremonial 575*
season X is required to attend every *kusiut* dance, thereby 533
learning much of the ceremonial, and during the following 535
summer his relatives, especially if food is plentiful, frequently
invite the *kukusiut* to their house. The singers beat out well-
known tunes, or practise those which will be required for the
following winter; if a song has been composed for X he dances
in time to it, in the style proper to his prerogative. Formerly,
when there were many novices, dances of this type took place
frequently and were useful in giving constant practice to
singers and neophytes alike. As no calls from supernatural
patrons can come at this time of year, it follows that all such
dances are of a non-sacred nature, although the uninitiated
are excluded. During his period as a novitiate, X has one
privilege; he can take food from anyone at any type of cere- 575*
mony. It is remembered that one novice was even bold 264
enough to take food which had been placed as an offering for
the dead.

When the next *kusiut* season opens, X attends every per- 575*
formance. This is probably the most thrilling and nerve-
racking period in his life. He does not know exactly when he 781
will be allowed to give his dance, since that is a matter of 796
arrangement between his relatives and the marshals, but he
knows that the time will soon be at hand. When the great
day, or rather night, actually comes, X is usually in a state of
abject terror. The rite itself does not differ from those about
to be described except that the first song relates the manner in
which X found the repository. But the mental attitude of X
differs greatly from that of an old performer. One informant,

[The Dance of Noaktenim]

if he so desires. The *kukusiut* listen to the song, and when it is running they join in. They practise it repeatedly, until familiar with both words and tune. This part of the ceremony lasts for about two hours. 575* 776* [533]

The singers, and any others who are prepared to beat time, are always provided with long, flat, thin sounding-boards to increase the din of the pounding. When the marshals decide that the song is sufficiently familiar, they tell some of the *kukusiut* to carry these boards to the lowest house of the village. They do this, and also scatter clean sand on the floor, as is customary whenever a supernatural being is to enter. The uninitiated persons within the house watch with great interest. The singers enter and take their places behind the fire, then other *kukusiut* and finally X himself; his face is unblackened, but he wears his two eagle tails in his hair and a collar of dyed cedar-bark. On his head is a thin cylindrical circlet, about four inches high, of the same material, ornamented with swan's down by the inhabitants of the villages of the upper Bella Coola valley. The collar consists of a roll of grass, entirely covered with dyed cedar-bark from which pendant tassels of the same hang down over his chest; similar ones are worn by casual dancers, except that the tassels hang down their backs. Every *kusiut* dancer wears these two ornaments, and those who have the necessary prerogative adorn themselves with an apron of deer hooves or puffin beaks. Blankets are always worn. *Kukusiut* women wear in addition woollen pubic garments. [242] [534] 575* 776* 242 [292] [291]

As the singers beat out X's tune, accompanied by the voices of themselves and other *kukusiut*, he dances. Since his style is typical of all *kukusiut* except Cannibals and a few others, it will be well to digress at this point in order to describe it. X raises his arms until their upper parts are approximately the height of his shoulders, and project outwards and slightly to the front; they are bent at the elbows with the forearms vertical, thus bringing the hands opposite the top of the head. Both wrists are shaken constantly, the muscles of the lower 575* 776* 535

[The Dance of Nuskanim]

*575 *796 arms being brought into play, so that the whole hands are constantly quivering without spasmodic movements. Ability to do this is one of the marks of a skillful performer, and the incessant shaking is continued without stop throughout the dance.
535 [539] Most *kusiut* songs are in five parts, which may be described as three verses, separated by two choruses. Near the beginning of the first verse X stands up, raises his arms, shakes his fingers, then slightly bends his legs and begins to step in time to the beating of the sticks. Some dancers remain almost stationary, marking time, to use the military term, others advance in steps of an inch or so, at intervals slowly revolving sunwise.[10] Sometimes X introduces a variation by bending from side to side, in which case one hand rises above the other. If the time of the song is very slow, he sinks, bending his knees to a great extent, and advances in more lengthy strides, never ceasing to shake his hands. *At* each chorus the time becomes so rapid that it is impossible to move the feet in accordance with it, and then X crouches, his shaking hands the only movement. If it
[424] [534] is a woman who is dancing—like most *kusiut* prerogatives, this one is not limited to men—the style of dancing is quite different. Keeping the upper part of each arm close to her body, the dancer extends her fore-arms, outwards, parallel to the ground, with the palms upwards. Like a man, she shakes her wrists, but few female dancers move from the spot on which they start, except perhaps to turn around, sunwise. Heralds always keep up a running fire of comments, especially when a woman is dancing, urging her not to be bashful, but to allow her breasts to shake. Some dancers have merged into one
[424] prerogative rights acquired from different ancestral tribes. In such cases they perform in two or more styles, each part according to one prerogative.

Kukusiut are always ready to assist one of their fellows, so that three or four friends are always willing to accompany the dancer. They stand close behind him, at frequent intervals blowing over his head the eagle down which either X, or some

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[171]

[10] The Bella Coola state that the Bella Bella revolve counter-sunwise.

[The Dance of Noakxnim]

of his relatives, has given them for this purpose. When he crouches during the chorus they crowd close around, almost concealing him. Particularly in those dances fraught with danger to the performer, it is customary for any number of his friends, either men or women, to dance to "help" him. Anyone wishing to do so merely stands up and begins, in time to the music, irrespective of what part of the house he may be in. It is considered contrary to good manners for a father so to help his son, or a brother a brother, but a dancer is pleased to have aid from anyone else. It is said that in Bella Bella certain *kukusiut* have definite prerogatives of helping in this way, but this is not the case in Bella Coola. Throughout every dance the *kukusiut* women utter their droning cry. 575* 796* 535 [548] [171] [538]

This, then, is the type of dance which the uninitiated in the lowest house see. They hear the song, too, and gaze with awe at X, imbued as he is with the supernatural power of sight. Then the sounding-boards are picked up and taken to the next house, where the whole ceremonial is repeated. This is done at each house of the village.[10] All the *kukusiut* now return to X's house, where he once more dances to his song. A box-drum is always used to help the singers in keeping time, and when the song has been finished two men continue in turn to beat it all day. X always arranges to have a relative or friend superintend the distribution of food, which follows his final dancing. As the *kukusiut* are eating, the marshals deliver their usual admonishments, a task that accompanies every meal. Then they call on the people to erect a raised platform between the fire and the back-wall of the house. Materials have been placed in readiness so that it is an easy matter to build a framework a few feet in height, of which the flat top is screened by a matting wall about three feet high. This is often decorated with designs of dyed cedar-bark without ritual significance so far as the Bella Coola of today are aware. X climbs to this platform, the *kukusiut* disperse, and only the incessant pounding of the drum proves that some unusual event is taking place. 575* 796* [534] [574] [531]

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[10] In Bella Coola, but perhaps not in Kimsquit.

[184]

*575 *796 592 593 Among the passengers in *Noâkxnum*'s canoe are a number of singers, who replace the usual ones on this *sulaxam*. Each wears the same type of mask, painted with red diagonals, and with white feathers projecting from the top. After the uninitiated have gazed for some time upon the wonders, their leader, *Ixaleraunimatik*, takes his place and his followers begin to beat out an ancient song, believed to be sung in *Noâkxnum*'s craft as it nears Bella Coola. The theme is:

"See me, mortals, I am *Nunanaisiskâlmut Noâkxnum*, the dancer of *Noâkxnum*."

As the music starts, a figure rises from among the singers, wearing a mask with heavy eye-brows and carrying a light staff about six feet in length, wound spirally with alternate bands of dyed and undyed cedar-bark and crowned with a tassel of dyed bark. Holding this in his hand he begins to 575 796 [535] dance lightly, running back and forth a few steps at a time in time to the beating of sticks, lifting his feet freely from the ground, and bending back and forth in airy grace, all the while waving his wand to and fro. There are no fixed steps, the only essential is that he convey the impression of being light of foot and a good dancer; accordingly, the person selected for this purpose is one with these qualifications. As he moves, *Āxe'likwmlaix* explains to the uninitiated that this is *Nunanaisiskâlmut*, a dancer of great repute who accompanies *Noâkxnum* and guards his singers. [535] At this point *Āxe'likwmlaix*'s own song may or may not be sung. It never varies, and is believed to have been handed down from dim antiquity. X himself must be the singer, accordingly it can be sung only when the dancer has a good voice. If this is the case, the marshals request him to perform, and, if necessary, teach him the exact words. X, standing behind the fire, sings alone and unaccompanied, then the singers repeat the song in unison with the beating of their [535] sticks, and *Āxe'likwmlaix* himself dances, using, of course, the feminine style. At this juncture the uninitiated must be en-

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[126]

Chicken feathers are now used.

One of these masks was purchased for the National Museum of Canada.

One of these masks was obtained for the National Museum of Canada.

[The Dance of Wila]

"Path Clearers" see to it that no one passes between him and the fire. The uninitiated are not expelled from the house and their curiosity is aroused. Meanwhile the singers prepare songs for X, describing his supernatural patrons, and some *kukusiut* carpenters are instructed to make in secret ten small pieces of wood, about one foot in length and six inches wide, sometimes half-moon shaped. They cover these with dyed cedar-bark on which they paint the designs appropriate to each being.[32] On the morning of the fourth day,[33] X blackens his face with soot or charcoal, obtained by pouring water on a fire, and dons the usual *kusiut* costume. A herald then invites the *kukusiut* to assemble in X's house. Presently they proceed to the lowest house of the village, where the singers beat out the tunes of the "Path Clearers," remembered from a previous year. They dance, while X stands, shifting his feet and moving his apron as if he also wished to perform but was too weary to do so. This is repeated at every house of the village, except that in which the potlatch was held; most of the *kukusiut* follow the procession, as do some of the uninitiated. Finally, with X last of all, they enter the potlatch house, where foreign guests and many uninitiated have assembled. 575* 796* [532] [302]

In Kimsquit the preliminary four days of watching are omitted, but from this point on, the rites of the two areas are practically identical.[34] As X enters, all the *kukusiut* who have pounding sticks begin to beat on the floor and the women drone. Without delay, and without attention to the timeless thumping, X begins to dance, sunwise, around the fire, at intervals casting on it particles of eagle down which have the effect of making the supernatural ones above take their places. He calls out intermittently that he can see the beings above sitting down, and a herald repeats his remarks loudly. In Bella Coola the four "Path Clearers" walk close behind X. [535] ● [789] [787]

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[32] The distinctive designs are given by Boas, to whom the reader is referred.

[33] It is possible that X must first lie down when *Nuskyaxm*'s dancer reports that the moon is at the mouth of the river.

[34] It is uncertain whether the differences in ritual are typical of Bella Coola and Kimsquit, or merely represent variations in individual prerogatives. [184] [424]

[The Dance of Wil·a]

575*
796*

to allow his son to be initiated on the next day. Then X dances once more and the *kukusiut* disperse.

There is no need to repeat an account of the preliminaries of *nebusam*, including the construction of the two shelters in the back corners of the house and the summoning first of the *kukusiut* and then of the uninitiated. When all is ready, a masked figure representing *Xemxemālotla* appears from one of the shelters, and dances around the fire, sunwise, revolving sunwise at the same time, while the *kukusiut* men pound violently, the *kukusiut* women drone, and the uninitiated stare with open mouths. As he dances he sings: [535]

"I am *Xemxemālotla*. The supernatural beings call continually on me as they give me presents. See me."

Then he stands in the centre of the space behind the fire, holding in his hand a stick that has just been given to him and which is decorated with dyed and undyed cedar-bark and a tuft of swan down at the top and middle. The beating of sticks died down while *Xemxemālotla* was making his announcement, but it now breaks out afresh as *Xemcua* appears. He too dances around the fire, announces his name and stands on *Xemxemālotla*'s right. There is more pounding, and out comes *Ăno'likwolsaix*, who circles the fire and stands on *Xemxemālotla*'s left. But instead of remaining motionless she constantly moves about the house, now here, now there, talking to the uninitiated and assuring them that it is *Xemxemālotla* whom they see. She takes care not to come into close contact with the uninitiated as her identity might be detected. One after the other the other patrons emerge, dance around the fire, and take their stations alternately to right and left of *Xemxemālotla*. *Kwlilias Nuskāmpta* keeps leaving his place as if to seek things from different parts of the house, while *Ălmāk·*, who is a kingfisher, moves to and fro in quick, hopping steps, imitating the actions of that bird. A few minutes after *Tlitcāplilān·a* has joined the others, *Xemxemālotla* begins to hum loudly: [535]

[The Cannibal Dance]

*575 in banning the rite if they do not think the dancer will be able
*796 to carry it out properly. When the call comes, the uninitiated
[424] are at once expelled from the Cannibal's house; later he rushes
to the graveyard and exhumes one of the meat-filled frames
previously buried. Non-members watch with horror as he
sinks his teeth in the "flesh." Closely guarded, he is then
taken to every house where, if they are bold, the uninitiated
peer forth from their bedrooms and watch his performance.
He carries part of the corpse in his arms and periodically sinks
his teeth in the repulsive mass. As usual, apparent attempts
are made to tie him to this earth, but in spite of them he escapes
to the upper regions where he remains for an unusually long
period. Great efforts are made to reduce him to a state of
[824] emaciation, for which purpose he drinks large amounts of
water in which cedar-wood has been boiled. When the Cannibal ultimately returns to earth, the cannibalistic incubus is
expelled and he at length becomes normal. When dancing, a
[535] corpse-eater constantly bends both hands towards the floor in
front of him and upwards, as though raising some heavy
object towards his face. Then his head sinks towards this,
only to be thrown quickly upwards and to one side, with a wild
expression in his eyes. The uninitiated are told that this represents the manner in which he lifts a corpse towards his
mouth and bites, only to be revolted by its putrescence. He
has, they hear, no actual liking for human flesh, but his incubus fills him with an irresistible craving for it. Frequently
[532] he wears on his blanket wooden representations of skulls (see
Plate 7), symbolic of the corpses devoured.

*575 Rarely, a corpse-eating Cannibal kills a slave and pretends
796 to devour his body as a means of impressing the uninitiated,
567 but usually this is done only under the driving force of revenge
648 or jealousy. If a man hears that a near relative, slave of a
foreign tribe, has been killed, he often determines to wipe out
blood with blood. He consults a corpse-eating Cannibal, and

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*Eating of corpses has long ceased among the Bella Coola; the present tense is used merely for consistency.

*A [see category 116, p 164(A) - ANALYST]

[The Scratch Dance]

*575 and the heralds keep telling all to be attentive. The chorus
*796 for every Scratcher's song consists of the supposedly meaningless
[533] words, *'aii*, *'aii*, as if a child were crying. It is said that the
same refrain is used for Scratch dances by every coastal tribe.
[171] After this practice the singers chant forth X's song more
loudly, the audience joins in, and he dances. The Scratch
*575 dance differs from all other *kusiut* ones in that there are no
*796 fixed movements, with the exception of keeping time to the
535 beating of sticks with the feet. The dancer sometimes bends
down and forward, with arms closely pressed between his legs,
or he bends back with arms thrown upwards; to and fro and
back and forth he goes with high steps or short mincing ones,
with hops or jumps, his arms waving like the arms of a windmill.
The best Scratch dancer is the one who can put most
action and originality into his movements. The weird effect is
increased by moving the facial muscles to cause strange grimaces.
Four *kukusiut*, two before and two behind, accompany
*575 X. At intervals he becomes excited and seizes his own hair
*796 as if in internal agony, whereupon his guardians press the back
of his neck and call *hoip* to soothe him. His dance completed,
he sits down, and no other performers follow him. The
[431] presents provided by X and his relatives are then distributed,
those scratched and the song makers being the chief recipients,
although everyone receives something. Then there is the
usual meal, accompanied by admonitions from the marshals,
followed by X dancing once more to his song.

Unlike most *kusiut* ceremonials, this does not complete the
night's rites. Accompanied by a number of *kukusiut*, X visits
every house in the village, and dances around the fire with
wildly waving arms while the whistle sounds eerily. Since the
[535] musicians do not beat time, his dance is without rhythmic
qualities, otherwise it follows the lack of pattern just described.
When he is brought back to his own house, the frenzied
beating of sticks is twice repeated to soothe him, and
water is thrown over him. Thus pacified, X goes to sleep and
the *kukusiut* quietly disperse.

[The Stomach-Cutting Dance]

*575 The singers have also composed a song for each of the *änuyex*
*796 and these too must be practised, while the men dance or remain
533 still as they think fit. Since no uninitiated are present the affair is purely a rehearsal. The words of each of these songs is of the manner in which the patron helped X to survive his ordeal. By this time it is late and the *kukusiut* disperse after the usual meal and admonitions of the marshals.

*575 The next day, *qothm*, the carpenters assemble early in the
*796 morning to start work. Since X is entitled to portray any of
532 the supernatural beings who are companions of his patron in the land above, it follows that there is wide variation in his choice of masks to be manufactured. The principal supernatural beings are always shown, and any animals, since all are supernatural, can likewise be displayed. As usual, a few *kukusiut* are invited at midday to share the meal provided for the carpenters. The number of masks to be provided is often so great that two days or more are necessary for their completion, in which case no ceremony takes place on the night
[533] which would normally be *qothm*; the *kukusiut* merely gather
and again practise their songs.

*575 But the day after is *qothm*. At dusk the *kukusiut* are called
*796 in for a final rehearsal of the songs, and then a summons is sent
[515] to the uninitiated, who have been washing and beautifying
themselves in eager anticipation. In Kimsquit it is customary
[532] to hang some of the masks on a sloping pole behind the fire and
[184] the sight of these amazes the non-members. First the singers
[781] beat out the song of one of the women mourners and she dances
in time to it, while the heralds near the door keep up a steady
●[535] stream of remarks, encouraging the woman to perform yet
[834] more strenuously and to have no modesty about shaking her
breasts. Then another of the women dances, followed in succession by the third and fourth if that is the number who sang the mourning songs. Next the *änuyex* perform, each in succession accompanying the song composed for him. Now comes the central feature of the evening, the performance of X himself. As the singers strike up the shaman's song which he is

* 575 * 746 776 the enclosure in the opposite corner to that from which they had emerged.

Anumintsknm. Three or four masked figures appear together to portray these beings. Their function is to remind *Ālquntām* of those whom he should invite to his ceremonials above.

Snınq. As this dreaded monster appears, the uninitiated cower convulsively and the *kukusiut* women drone. Several [789] masked figures accompany the *Snınq* around the fire, blowing eagle down over the creature, and *Āno°likwolsaix* explains to the uninitiated that this is to protect them from the monster. The heralds as usual echo her remarks. After one circuit of the fire, the *Snınq* disappears into one of the enclosures behind the fire.

Haohao. This supernatural, mythological denizen of the mountains, is in the form of an enormous bird with long beak and bony wings. The mask worn with the disguise is usually [532] about three feet in length, in the shape of a bird's head with long beak. A stick passes from its butt down the wearer's back and is held in place by his belt, thus balancing the heavy, projecting bill (see Plate 8).[1] It is hinged so that the performer can make the mandibles snap together by pulling a cord concealed under his blanket. A good actor, and such is [535] always chosen to represent his creature, bends forward and downwards so that the snapping beak almost brushes the floor; then he rises and pauses like a bird when listening and half startled. Next he runs a few steps, in a mincing manner, thus slowly circling the fire, and ultimately passes from sight into the enclosure other than that from which he has emerged. Several *kukusiut* accompany the actor, blowing eagle down over him, the women drone and *Āno°likwolsaix* keeps up a string of comments. After a short pause a second *haohao* appears and circles the fire with its attendant *kukusiut*. The same procedure is repeated for a third and fourth.

Ālkwaliāxnm. This is the supernatural herald for Thun- [532] der, the leading *kusiut* among supernatural beings. He wears

[1] [see category 16, p 164 (B) - ANALYST]

[The Stomach - Cutting Dance]

a mask representing a man and carries a stick with which he 575*
beats on the floor as he cries out: 796*

"Come, ye supernatural ones. The most famous *kusiut* of 776
all [Thunder] is about to dance."

Thunder. The mask representing this creature is large and 532
of fearsome appearance with hooked beak and overhanging
forehead; it is always carried by a man of powerful physique
(see Plate 9).[1] A box has been placed beside the enclosure so 575*
that, when Thunder first appears, standing upon it, his ap- 796*
parent size is increased. He bends to and fro, and up and
down, in an amazing fashion, blowing through his clenched 776
teeth, while *Ánoᵒlikwolsaix* informs the uninitiated who he is, 535
and expatiates on his powers. After twisting and turning for several minutes, Thunder leaps to the floor of the house, and as he does so there sounds a peal of thunder. The uninitiated do not know that this is caused by a number of *kukusiut* rolling stones to and fro in large wooden boxes within the enclosures at the back. Then he starts to dance sunwise around the fire, bending down and up, shaking himself and stamping violently, his amazing gyrations being constantly accompanied by the reverberation of rolling stones. Escorted by several *kukusiut* he circles the fire, and after a final stamping and twisting, disappears into the enclosure. In a few minutes he appears again, and repeats his dance. Since no one man is strong enough to carry out this athletic performance twice in succession, the mask has been transferred to another *kusiut* within the enclosure, but of course the uninitiated are unaware of this. Thunder always comes out four times in all, on each occasion dancing once around the fire. Sometimes four different men perform; sometimes the one who danced first has recovered sufficiently to be able to repeat on the fourth round. The usual explanations by *Ánoᵒlikwolsaix* add zest to the rite. On this occasion the customary dance of Thunder with a fire rattle was omitted.

Sxnxnasáxs. Twelve of these beings appear together, dis- 575*
guised behind masks representing young girls. They are the 796*

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[1] [see category 116, p 164 (c) - ANALYST] 776
[532]

[the Ghost Dance]

*575 leave their bedrooms, but peer curiously and fearfully around
*796 the edge of the boards. Finally the party returns to X's house,
whence the uninitiated hear the sound of sticks being beaten
in a frenzied manner, but without the usual rhythmic con-
[775] clusion. Each *kusiut* beats as he likes, because it is an affair
of the dead with whom all things are queer and unnatural.

*575 The ghosts wash and take their places in X's house where
*796 the singers are working on a new song. The words, as if spoken
775 by the dancer, describe the land of the dead; how everything
533 is green there; how the river flows from west to east so that the
sun travels upstream; how the shades wished to make him a
chief, and deceived him by not giving proper presents; how he
visited the various towns scattered along the river, finding the
bone in one of the houses; and finally how the dead told him
of any mistakes in ritual that had been committed in the Bella
Coola villages, in Kimsquit, or in *Tāl·io*. This last is, of course,
common knowledge, but the Ghost dance is the only *kusiut*
ceremonial in which such information is used in the text of a
song. Details are given, but the wording is so ambiguous that
when the uninitiated later hear the song they do not compre-
hend its meaning. Since the *kukusiut* have concealed the error
referred to, the necessity for veiled allusions is apparent.
Everything connected with the Ghost dance is carried out in
the reverse order; thus, the reference of X to presents which he
did not receive is merely an intimation that he will presently
bestow gifts on the singers and the other *kukusiut* who have
[171] assisted him. The wordless chorus of the tune consists of
'aiye'axwaia, a phrase said to be the same for Ghost dances
among all the coastal tribes. The singers practise this song
while the audience listens attentively; then it is sung vigour-
*575 ously by all, while X dances. His style differs from that of all
*796 other *kukusiut*; first one arm and then the other is kept ex-
●535 tended, downwards, at an angle in front of the body with the
424 forefinger pointing to the ground. This method of dancing is
the prerogative of all Ghost dancers and provides a variation
to the somewhat monotonous performances on different

gotlem.

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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[The Dance of the Dark-Shade]

preferably skilled carpenters. Heralds visit every house in 575*
the village informing all that X has gone to meet, or to wait 796*
for, Dark-Shade.

Meanwhile X and his companions are utilizing the last hours of daylight in collecting a large quantity of gum. They build a fire, and by its flickering light the dancer is coated with gum so carefully that even his teeth and nails are invisible; in this disguise he represents Dark-Shade. Early the following morning the singers and those *kukusiut* who have already danced during the current season set off on lashed canoes to meet X and his party whom they take on board. Waiting till the tide is favourable, the canoes are slowly poled up the river.
As they come in sight of the village, the singers strike up some [535]
well-known tune, and in time to it everyone on the platform [424]
between the canoes begins to dance, each using the style proper to his prerogative. It is an animated scene. The uninitiated watch the approach, and gaze with wonder upon the strange dark figure; it is all so uncanny that they need little urging from the *kukusiut* to withdraw to their houses, where they
peer curiously through chinks in the walls. Members of the 575*
society line the river bank and, as Dark-Shade draws near, one 796*
after another cries out that a call has come to him. The 787
marshals have previously decided who shall dance at this time and informed those selected; sometimes it is a *kusiut* who has already performed once during the season, or it may be a person who has not performed for many years.

All the *kukusiut* accompany Dark-Shade and her escort to 575*
X's house from which all uninitiated have long been expelled. 796*
The singers compose a new song of which the words are ar-
ranged as if Dark-Shade, not X, were speaking. The theme [533]
of one, used a number of years ago, is:

"Let X fetch me to visit mortals."

Unfortunately, the details of X's dance were unavailable. Dark-Shade herself remains for four days hidden within X's house, though he attends the ceremonies of other *kukusiut* and his presence there on the nights of *qotlim* and *nubusam* is a

*533 instrument is the drum.[1] In former times the drum consisted
*796 solely of a box, though recently skin drums have been adopted
from the Carriers. There is usually one singer especially proficient
*575 in using this, though sometimes another takes his place;
[534] all such arrangements are completed during the final rehearsal.
[177] A final decision is also reached as to who shall fill the three
principal parts, *sankwolsäm*, *ältaia*, and *lsulkım*. It is the duty of the *sankwolsäm* or *leader*, to regulate the time; he squats facing the others, who are grouped in a close semicircle, and indicates the rhythm by pounding with his stick on the floor. When a song is to start, he first taps rapidly, then modifies and regulates it throughout. The leader should be the best musician among the singers, and the same individual usually functions on all occasions although a rearrangement is sometimes necessary. In the centre of the singers sits the *ältaia*, *announcer*, who must possess a powerful voice. As already mentioned, every song consists of three parts, each with several subdivisions. When the leader has beaten time rapidly to indicate that the singers are ready, the announcer bellows out the words of the first subdivision so that all the audience can hear them. Crash! goes the leader's stick and his voice gives the key for singing the words just called out, in which the audience is expected to join. As they are finishing, the announcer roars the next subdivision, and the same procedure is repeated. Instead of proceeding to the third, the announcer often next returns to the first, following it by the second. The subdivisions of a single part are never sung through in order once only, there are always repetitions and ramifications according to the discretion of the announcer. At the end of the first part, the leader again beats time rapidly in which his fellow-singers join.
●[535] If a dancer is performing, he crouches down without making any effort to keep time with the rapid tapping, and the singing ceases. After a short pause, the second part is sung in the same manner, followed likewise by the third. The function of

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[1] Rattles, made of dried maple, are used by some masked dancers, but they can hardly be termed musical instruments.

Nusáxkämy SONGS

The texts of *nusáxkämy* songs are fragmentary and unsatisfactory. The rites in which they were used have long bee discontinued and, since they were never ceremonially impor tant, there was nothing to impress either tunes or words on the minds of the singers. In addition, it is probable that the song were always less carefully constructed than those of othe types.

533*
[796]

Song Used for Ḳolen(a), a Kimsquit Man(b)

[illegible]	*[illegible]*	*[illegible]*
Be happy,	ye people,	it is about to come,

[illegible]	*[illegible]*
that hidden one(c),	Beaver.

[WORDLESS CHORUS]

Ḳoleni'i	*Ḳoleni'i*	*wa-xai-yai*
Beaver(d)!	Beaver!	*wa-xai-yai*(e).

(a) This word means "Beaver." It is most unlikely that it was the dancer's ow designation, more probably a nickname used in connection with the *nusáxkämy* rit

(b) Recorded as song VII D 9b, National Museum of Canada; singer, Louis Hal

(c) This signifies a person who is hidden ceremonially, such as a *kusiut* dance who has gone to the land above. The dancer expected to be a Cannibal and th rite in which this song was used served as a kind of rehearsal.

(d) This refrain replaces a second and third part of the song itself.

(e) A meaningless series of choral ejaculations.

[551]
[796]
[575]

Song Used for a Kimsquit Woman(a)

[illegible]	*[illegible]*	*[illegible]*	*[illegible]*
They heard	of Fawn(b),	when they were playing	long ago(c).

(a) Recorded as song VII D 9d, National Museum of Canada; singer, Ji Pollard.

(b) The theme being of a fawn, the dancer wore a deer-skin.

(c) As in many *nusáxkämy* songs, the words refer to an ancient story, probabl one describing the adventures of deer and wolves; see vol. II, p. 488.

[535] ●

Song Used for [illegible], a Kimsquit Man(a)

[illegible]	*[illegible]*	*[illegible]*	*[illegible]*
Run in all directions,	ye dogs,	for the first time	it is there

[illegible]	*[illegible]*	*[illegible]*	*[illegible]*
he brings much food(b),	go below the house	?(c)	?(d).

[776]
[192]

533*

B *Aiakāsxutsmāloisandja*	*āltidāk·ānatldai*	*dikilomomātutsldai*
I was not good enough(*d*)	when came to me	my patron;

sumxumstqwosamatlsundai
I told him so.

[WORDLESS CHORUS]

C *Wasqotlnuilots·ltiamālsuks*	*āmātadsamālimdai*	*diqotlqotlimxodai*
No one passed outside his house(*e*)	within sight	when blackened his face

entlatlaikilasudai
Moon(*f*).

(*a*) This song, composed by Reuben Schooner, was used during the *kusiut* season of 1923-4.

(*b*) It was impossible to obtain individual translations for these three subdivisions.

(*c*) The reference is to the call. The meaning of this whole first part is highly problematical; the references are intentionally obscure to impress the uninitiated.

(*d*) That is: I did not have sufficient goods to distribute for a ceremony.

(*e*) The theme here changes from a description of the dancer's experience to an account of his patron's actions in the land above.

(*f*) That is: When Moon, the dancer's patron, blackened his face, no one passed even within sight of his house. As uninitiated are forbidden to pass in front of a dwelling in which a *kusiut* dance is taking place, so supernatural beings avoid the vicinity of Moon's house when he is performing. The blackening of the face refers to an eclipse, but has an added significance since it is an intimation of a dance.

[776] [784] [821]

As already described (II, p. 229), the Otter dance differs from most *kusiut* rites and the songs are likewise peculiar. They do not vary from year to year and the following example, used during the season of 1923-4, contains many points of an unusual nature, not even understood by the participants themselves. It has only two parts, each with a different tune, and the performer carried out her rite by dancing in two distinct ways. In the first part, she raised and lowered her fore-arms as is customary, but followed this with a smoothing motion, as if she were levelling upturned earth. The significance of this seems to have been forgotten entirely.

533*
[575] ×
[796] ×
[535] ●

Song Used for Kasulān·i, a Female Kimsquit Otter Dancer(a)

A *Alaiasalaqadux*	*yao daxlicyumyumdux*	*sawāskpākstnamsdux*
It has always been so,	it(*b*) has no shame(*c*);	all see it

B
T
648
728
killed, his reputation would only be increased by the manner of his death. At length *Ne·xwnkai* fired into the air; not until a shower of eagle down was blown forth did anyone realize that his musket had been loaded with nothing more deadly. This marked the establishment of friendly relations.

B
T
● [539]
[431]
The Kitkatla had brought their own singers,[1] who now began to beat out time for *Tcubsa* to perform a *susaak* dance. He was followed by several other chiefs, and then the strangers gave presents to influential Bella Coola on the most lavish scale. *Potlas* likewise performed a *susaak* dance, and bestowed gifts on the guests to validate it; such were, of course, not returnable. A meal was then served, and after that *Tcubsa* made a speech of which the gist was that the Bella Coola had previously known his achievements as a warrior, they now knew his nobility and bravery in risking his life, and that the name *Tcubsa* could never be forgotten, irrespective of his own fate.

Tcubsa left soon afterwards. It was somewhat difficult fully to comprehend his motive in thus risking his life. Undoubtedly his main object was to display his valour and disregard of danger. Moreover, it gave him an opportunity to impress these qualities upon the Bella Coola, and thus to exhibit his prowess actually within the enemy's camp, which must have been a source of tremendous gratification to him. The alleged motive, regret at killing a chief, may have been a contributory factor.

B
T
648
556
574
[721]
Although this visit was an intimation from *Tcubsa* that the Bella Coola need have no further fear of him, the suspicions of years could not be immediately allayed; in fact, an occasional skirmish still took place although *Tcubsa* himself refrained from fighting. A few years after his visit to Bella Coola, *Potlas* prepared to give a potlatch to which he determined to invite the northern chief. Many of the Bella Coola doubted whether the Kitkatla warriors would respect the safe-conduct usually afforded to envoys, and no one was anxious to bear the invitation. At length six chiefs volunteered for the task and set out, though with many misgivings. They stopped *en route* at Bella Bella where a chief of that tribe, *Omgé*, joined the party; he thought that he would have influence with the Kitkatla and might add protection to the Bella Coola. Fearing to be seen by any small Kitkatla bands, the delegation travelled only by night until they could actually reach *Tcubsa*'s village. As they paddled up, they indicated their mission by singing one of *Potlas*'s *susaak* songs. On hearing this, *Tcubsa* asked one of his Bella Coola slaves whose song it might be, and when he answered that it was one of *Potlas*'s, *Tcubsa* despatched a chief, *Kwinas*, to invite the guests to his house. *Omgé* was thankful when he saw this man approaching, since he felt that it heralded a *friendly* welcome. The party was conducted to *Tcubsa*'s

[1] [i.e. to the peace negotiations – ANALYST]

115 Schooner lacked the mental acumen of Joshua and Jim, but
177 he revealed himself as a tribal patriarch, proud of his family's
[153] history and eager to assist his grandchildren and great-grandchildren,
but feeling himself lost and helpless in the struggle
before them. With sadness, but without bitterness, he used
to speak of the approaching end of Bella Coola culture, and his
words brought home the tragedy which the spread of civilization
brings to so many, and the responsibility resting upon the
white people as a whole.

153 Until an intelligence test is devised to correlate the mental
115 ability of the white man with that of the native, it is impossible
to compare the two scientifically. None the less, the
writer deliberately expresses the opinion that Joshua Moody
and Jim Pollard are two of the most brilliant men he has met
in any walk of life. They are undoubtedly the most able of
the Bella Coola; others have only slightly less ability, while
the mass of the population compares favourably with an
average white community. Their ability, however, is definitely
178 conditioned by their conservatism. Absolute trust in the
traditions of their ancestors has checked speculation, as the
established explanation is never questioned; new inventions,
unauthorized by custom, have been regarded as almost sacrilegious;
[626] the force of public opinion, while valuable as a deterrent
to anti-social practices, has effectively restrained innovations.
The Bella Coola are a good example of a community
where development has been atrophied by extreme conservatism
fostered by religious beliefs.

105 Taking into account the material obstacles, the achievements
of these people have not been insignificant. In former
[322] times, provided only with tools of stone and untempered
copper, they built graceful canoes, made watertight boxes,
hewed planks from mighty cedars, and erected large houses
which called for considerable engineering skill. Judged by
[532] white standards, their carving and painting lacked artistic delicacy,
[535] but it required no mean ability to portray crest designs to
meet their own standards. Passing from the purely mechanical

to the aesthetic, their skill in dancing and dramatics is note- 105
worthy: no one who has witnessed a native dance can fail to [535]
have been impressed by the performance of the participants
and the stage-craft of the carpenters. The fact that no system [538]
of writing had ever been devised has prevented the establish- [212]
ment of a native literature, but the practice of passing down [153]
an extensive folklore by word of mouth shows their narrative
powers as well as their faculty for remembering details. At
present it is difficult to appreciate what must have been their
energy in earlier times when they faced the struggle for exist-
ence, armed with stone tools. Abundant salmon gave them [226]
adequate food, but only when weirs had been built with great
labour. Though game was plentiful, the hunter was equipped [224]
with nothing more formidable than a bow and arrow. The
simplest task required patience and skill undreamed of by the
average white man. If the reader will allow his imagination
to carry him backwards two hundred years, he will realize that
the mere provision of food and clothing necessitated constant
effort and ceaseless exertion.

Hand in hand with many admirable characteristics, the 356
Bella Coola display others which strike the white man as
unprepossessing. A first impression is the untidiness of their
houses. Exteriorly, they are often fairly neat, but confusion
reigns within. Clothing, instead of being hung up, is left lying
on the floor; bed-coverings are piled carelessly; dirty dishes
cover the tables; dogs and children swarm over the floor; flies
abound; all is dirty and slovenly. The house itself may be
uncompleted; a window lacks glass and has been boarded up;
the roof leaks, or the steps are falling down. Nor are the
surroundings more attractive. There is one struggling flower- [247]
bed in the village, but elsewhere the houses are surrounded by [351]
wastes of mud where horses and cattle wander, dogs prowl, and [231]
children play. In the distance the mountain peaks rise in
splendour, but near at hand all is squalid and unkempt.

They are only slightly more particular about their personal 515
appearance. Dirt does not distress them. They wash occa-

501 of the older people remember seeing in their youth another type, *lakan*, with a high raised prow; this may have been identical with the *mlka* which others describe as having an elevated bow and a low stern. An entirely different craft was the *tamkwal-i*, named from one of the geese, [825] probably the white-fronted goose. A strip of maple fastened along each side caught the water in moving, with a sound like that of the peculiar rustling flight of the bird. The bow was often carved in the form of a [532] bird's head and the stern in that of a tail to further the resemblance. No living Bella Coola claims to have seen one of these canoes, though some had heard of them from their grandparents. The large, open type of canoe made by the Haida was known to the Bella Coola, but not constructed by them. Sails were used on all ocean-going canoes; they were usually of matting, though skins sewn together were occasionally employed.

501 Canoes are occasionally lashed together. In several *kusiut* dances a wide platform for dancing is required, and the need is met by lashing 535 planks crosswise over two canoes, near the bow and stern, thus fastening them together. Planking is laid on the two supports and a platform so constructed. Careful inquiries showed that this fastening was merely a temporary arrangement; the booms were not bound in any particular manner, nor was there any fixed distance between the craft. Sometimes 501 the same expedient was used for transport when the load was too heavy [171] for two canoes separately, a device which is said to have been used more commonly by the tribes of the outer coast than the Bella Coola. Canoes lashed together are termed *ks-awanip*.

Rafts, *satskwal-a*, consisting of rough logs fastened together with cross-pieces, were commonly used on the lakes of the interior, and occasionally for river work when canoes were unavailable and there was no time to make them. Another expedient in similar emergencies was to [177] make bark canoes, such as are still constructed by the Carriers. The Bella Coola regard the construction of these as definite copying, and do not profess to have as much skill as their teachers whose canoes, it is said, can be folded for portaging. There is a tradition that, many generations ago, a few clever Bella Coola knew how to make skin canoes.

THE PREPARATION OF CEDAR-BARK

214 Early spring is the time to *sutsuhumls*, that is, to gather the inner bark of the cedar. Men occasionally assist in the task, though this is really [221] woman's work. The worker selects a small cedar, choosing one about six inches in diameter, with smooth trunk and relatively free from knots. [462] With a knife she makes a horizontal incision in the bark, two or three feet [412] from the ground, sometimes girdling the sapling. Then she inserts her

APPENDIX B

STRING FIGURES

THE only form of pastime which it was practical to investigate in any 524
detail was the construction of string figures. These seem to have no [121
ceremonial or religious significance; they are made for recreation only,
and it was found easy to learn a number while paving the way for other 182
kinds of research. In fact, interest in them was one of the ways in which
the writer became friends with a number of Bella Coola. As is to be 123]
expected, some individuals are more proficient in constructing complicated string figures than others, the old women being particularly adept.
During the long delays which occur in all the dances it is a common sight [535
to see an old crone teaching a group of young girls the figures which she 867
herself learnt when young. Some men remember a number from childhood, but the making of designs with string is regarded as more fitting for 887
girls and women. Songs accompany many of the figures, and the singing
of these is considered an essential part of the construction. It was stated 533]
that many more figures were known long ago; in fact, several of those here
recorded were only obtained after repeated efforts on the part of an old
woman to reconstruct those which she had been shown when a child. No [121]
attempt was made to learn all the Bella Coola figures; a larger number
could doubtless have been collected, but those here described are the ones
most commonly made.

The nomenclature used is that described by Miss Haddon,[1] in itself 128
following the method used by Rivers and Haddon. It will be assumed 524
that the reader is familiar with this, including the meaning of the terms, "Opening A," "Position 1," and "Navaho." A string about four feet long will be found most convenient for making the Bella Coola figures.

1. A SALMON-TRAP

Double the loop; two strands now take the place of the usual one, but 524
these will be referred to as a single string or loop. The figure can be made equally well with a string one-half the usual length.

Place string as a simple loop over left thumb and index finger and the right hand.

With right index finger hook down the string passing dorsally across left thumb and index finger and draw out to right, allowing right hand loop to slip over this hooked-down string.

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[1] K. Haddon, *Cat's Cradles from Many Lands* (London, 1911).

192*

[illegible]: Supernatural being sent by [illegible] to meet [illegible].

[illegible], "One Who Is a Guest": The term applied to a youth whose father, a chief, will certainly give a potlatch to start him on the path to social importance, though he has not yet done so. Such a lad is served ceremonially at every feast. [352]

[illegible]: Abalone-shell ornament which used by one of the first ancestors in the beginning of time.

[illegible]: One of the first women to settle at [illegible] in the beginning of time.

[illegible]: Word of uncertain meaning often appended to [illegible] as complete term for the first night of a *kusiut* dance. [376]

[illegible], "A Dragging Across" (as one does with a heavy log): The term applied to the transmission of a name from a wife to her husband either at marriage or later, when being [illegible]. [432] [333]

[illegible]: Toasted food of any kind. [242]

[illegible]: Ancestral name of a [illegible] man.

[illegible]: [illegible], adjective. [252]

[illegible]: Those who perform at some marriage dances.

[illegible]: *Kusiut* name of a Bella Coola man.

[illegible]: One of the first men to settle at [illegible] in the beginning of time. [375]

[illegible], "Weapons of War": The term applied to the presents distributed by the groom and his relatives to the bride and hers prior to entering her house. [451]

[illegible]: Gifts given in return, soon after betrothal, by the father of the future groom to the father of the future bride. [511]

[illegible]: Blanket.

[illegible]: Immortal supernatural woman, synonym for [illegible].

[illegible]: One of the men who came to earth at [illegible] in the beginning of time.

[illegible]: Totem pole erected by the first ancestor at [illegible] in the beginning of time.

[illegible]: Lying position with legs close together such as is maintained for four days by an adolescent girl, and also by a widow or a widower. [376]

[illegible]: Sacred song in fast time. [333]

[illegible]: Rapid beating of time during which a dancer does not try to move his feet in rhythm with it. [333]

[illegible]: Daughter of the first ancestor at [illegible] in the beginning of time.

[illegible]: *Kusiut* dancer whose disguise becomes apparent through an accident.

[illegible]: Synonym for [illegible], one of the days of a potlatch, probably thus designated from the appearance of a carved representation of the [illegible]. [336]

[illegible]: 1—Night time.
2—That part of a Cannibal dance when songs are prepared in the middle of the night.

[illegible]: Come, imperative singular.

[illegible]: 1—One of [illegible]'s sons in the beginning of time.
2—One of the first women to settle at [illegible] in the beginning of time.

[illegible]: Central seat behind the fire.

[illegible]: Hammer with handle for pounding stakes for fish-weirs. [412]

[illegible]: Mountain on north side of the lower Bella Coola.

[illegible]: One who estimates the passage of time by watching the movements of the sun. [105]

[illegible], "The Dreams of Man Killed by Another": Term used by hunters to Wolf. [125]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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H. Smith E-5 (1920-1923) 1925

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The beneficial purposes include: making a child grow up to be a good dancer, industrious, a swift berry picker, or a strong man; curing lung trouble; making the river recede when desired; and two ways of stopping rain. The injurious purposes include: two ways of making a person grow up to be a thief; the causing of crankiness and quarrelsomeness and the three ways of causing death.

The materials and actions used include: ashes of aspen leaves; a dead toad, used with hair, with a red cedar bark face wiper, and with last pieces of thimble berry shoots which were accidentally dropped while being eaten; ashes of a yellow jacket's nest; a living raven with phlegm; beaver paws, in two instances; a skin bracelet from a beaver's foreleg; a dead wood-rat; a dead mouse; a grizzly bear's skin; a living red squirrel with a bit of spruce fringe; setting fire to a wood-rat's house; and poking an ant hill.

To make a person a good dancer the ashes of the burned leaves of the aspen or trembling poplar were said to be rubbed, but Joshua said this may have been a joke. The Bellacoola Indians say the leaves dance. They never say that they tremble. When a baby was born, if the parents talked about it and the father desired that the baby grow up to be a good dancer, the mother or father got the leaves, burned them and put the ashes on the baby's hands, knees and elbows. When telling of this Joshua held his hands with the finger tips up and moved them as the Bellacoola do in dancing. Both rich and poor were danced.

A baby girl would grow up to be industrious, it was believed, if the worn limbs of a recently dead beaver were applied to her. The Bellacoola apparently observed the great industry of the beaver.

To make a baby girl grow up to be a fast berry-picking woman, the ring of skin from between two nails around a beaver's foreleg was put on her wrist and was left on until it wore off.

To make a boy grow up to be a strong man, a skin of the grizzly bear, was thrown over him, generally by his father.

For phlegm on the lungs, more permanent than a simple cold, the patient experimented in something and some one secretly mixed the fresh phlegm with salmon eggs and put the mixture by the secrets of the Kü'siut. She wore ornaments of red cedar-bark around her head, wrists, and ankles; her face was blackened, her hair strewn with eagle-down. She commanded the woman to dance in the same way as she saw her dancing. The people should accompany her dance with songs, and, after she had finished, they should dance with masks. She said, 'Whenever a person sees me your people shall dance the Kü'siut. If you do not do so I shall punish you with death and sickness. In summer, while I am in my house, you must not dance the Kü'siut.'

Ever since that time the Bilqula dance the Kü'siut. When a man has seen Anułikutsai's sitting before her cave he will invite the people to a Kü'siut. A ring made of red and white cedar-bark is hung up in his house, and the uninitiated are not allowed to enter it. Only in the evening, when dances are performed, they may look on, standing close to the door. As soon as the dances are over they must retire from the dance house. Each Kü'siut lasts three days.

The various dances performed by members of the Kü'siut are also the property of the gentes, and the right of performing them is restricted to members of the gens. They must not be given to a daughter's husband, as is the case with the Sisau'k dances (see above), but belong to the members of the gens alone. They may, however, be loaned and borrowed by members of the gens, who have a right to a particular dance, but who do not own it. Permission to use a mask or dance is obtained from the owner by payments. The owner may reclaim the dance or the borrower may return it at any time. Membership of the Kü'siut is obtained through an initiation. At this time the novice is given his Kü'siut name, which he retains throughout life. Each gens has its peculiar Kü'siut names, which are inherited by young persons from their parents or from other relatives. Thus a young man who had the name of Pö'pi until he was about seventeen years old obtained at his initiation the name of Tl'akö'tl. I have not reached a very clear understanding of the details of the initiation; it seems that the dance is simply given to the novice in the same way as the Sisau'k, this initiation being connected with a potlatch. But still it seems possible that he must 'dream' of the dance which he is to perform. Only the highest degrees of the Kü'siut have to pass through a religious ceremony of some importance. The highest degrees are the ē'laqötla (the Hämats'a of the Kwakiutl), the O'lqa (the Nū'lmal of the Kwakiutl), and the Dō'tsa (the Nū'tlmatl of the Hē'iltsuk). These grades are also hereditary. A Kü'siut novice may acquire them at once at his first initiation.

When the ē'laqötla is initiated he goes into the forest, where he encounters his guardian spirit. It is believed that he goes up to the sun, and formerly he had to take human flesh along for food. The chiefs held a council the night preceding the beginning of the ceremonies, and any one who wanted to show his liberality offered one of his slaves to be killed, in order to serve as food for the ē'laqötla. The offer was accepted and a payment of from ten to twenty blankets made for the slave. The slave was killed, and the members of the ē'laqötla order devoured one half of the body before the departure of the novice to the woods. There the latter is tied up and left to fast. He may stay there for twenty or thirty days until the spirit appears to him and takes him up to the sun, where he is initiated. Early one morning he returns, and is heard outside the houses. He has lost all his hair, which, it is believed, has been torn

424 owe my information regarding the clans, and who is a member of the
532 gens Ialo'stimot of the Talio'mx·, stated that he had received the raven
614 when he gave his first potlatch. At his second potlatch he received
[115 the eagle. He hoped that his mother would give him the whale at his
next potlatch, and would at the same time divulge to him the secrets connected
556] with it. In course of time, he said, he might get even others
from his brother; but if the latter's children should prove to be very
good, and develop very rapidly, his brother would probably give his
secrets to his own children. At festivals, when a person acquires a new
424 secret, he changes his name. Each person has two names, a kū'siut
551 name, which remains through life, and a Xi'mimim name, which is
556 changed at these festivals. Thus, Nusk'ulu'stals's (which is his kū'siut
575 name) Xi'mimim name was At'l'ananx'lus'alx·, but at his next potlatch
614 he intended to take the name of Kalit'k'a. These names are
also the property of the various clans, each clan having its own names.
When a man possesses several sisau'k· secrets, he will distribute them
among his children. When a girl marries, her father or mother may,
after a child has been born to her, give one or several of their sisau'k·
secrets to her husband, as his children make him a member of her clan.
When a person grows old, he gives away all his sisau'k· secrets. After
any secret has been given away the giver must not use it any more.
[426] The crest and the sisau'k· carvings must not be loaned to others,
but each person must keep his own carvings. The only exceptions are
the carved headdresses and the raven rattles, which are not the
property of any particular clan.

426 The laws regarding the potlatch are similar to those of the Kwakiutl.
556 The receiver of a present becomes the debtor of the person who gave
the potlatch. If the latter should die, the debts become due to his
heirs. If the debtor should die, his heirs become responsible for the
debt. Property is also destroyed at potlatches. This is not returned,
and serves only to enhance the social position of the individual who
performed this act. It is not necessary that all the property given by
a person in a potlatch should be owned by him. He may borrow part
of it from his friends, and has to repay it with interest. I was told,
for instance, that a man borrowed a large copper plate and burnt it at a
potlatch. When doing so, he had to name the price which he was going
to pay the owner in its stead. Since that feast he died, and his heirs
are now responsible for the amount named at the potlatch.

575 The kū'siut is presided over by a female spirit, called Anaulikutsai'x·.
773 Her abode is a cave in the woods, which she keeps shut from
February till October, remaining all the while inside. In October she
776 opens the door of her cave and sits in front of it. A woman is said to
●535 have been the first to find her. Anaulikutsai'x· invited her into her
cave and taught her the secrets of the kū'siut. She wore ornaments
of red cedar bark around her head, waist, and ankles; her face was
blackened, her hair strewn with eagle down. She commanded the

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woman to dance in the same way as she saw her dancing. The people 575
should accompany her dance with songs, and, after she had finished, 773
they should dance with masks. She said, "Whenever a person sees 776
me, your people shall dance the kū'siut. If you do not do so, I shall 535 ●
punish you with death and sickness. In summer, while I am in my
house, you must not dance the kū'siut."

Ever since that time the Bi'lxula dance the kū'siut. When a man 575
has seen Anaulikutsai'x· sitting in front of her cave, he will invite the 776
people to a kū'siut. A ring made of red and white cedar bark is hung 535
up in his house, and the uninitiated are not allowed to enter it. Only
in the evening, when dances are performed, they may look on, standing
close to the door. As soon as the dances are over, they must retire
from the taboo house. Each kū'siut lasts three days.

The various dances performed by members of the kū'siut are also 535
property of the clans, and the right to perform them is restricted to 575
members of the clan. They must not be given to a daughter's husband, 614
as is the case with the sisa'uk· dances, but belong to the members
of the clan, who have a right to a particular dance, but who do
not own it. Permission to use a mask or dance is obtained from the 575
owner by payments. The owner may reclaim the dance or the borrower [434]
may return it at any time. Membership of the kū'siut is obtained
through an initiation. At this time the novice is given his kū'siut [551]
name, which is inherited by young persons from their parents or from [438]
other relatives. Thus a young man who had the name of Pö'pō until
he was about seventeen years old, obtained at his initiation the name
of [illegible]. I have not reached a very clear understanding of the
details of the initiation; it seems that the dance is simply given to the [554]
novice in the same way as the sisa'uk·, this initiation being connected
with a potlatch. But still it seems possible that he must "dream" of the
dance which he is to perform. Only the highest degrees of the kū'siut
have to pass through a religious ceremony of some importance. The [170]
highest degrees are the Ela'xotla (the ha'mats'a of the Kwakiutl), the [534]
o'lxo (the nū'tlmatl of the Kwakiutl), and the dō'tlo (the no'ntsistalal
of the Kwakiutl). These grades are also hereditary. A kū'siut novice
may acquire them at once at his first initiation.

When the Ela'xotla is initiated, he goes into the forest, where he 575
encounters his guardian spirit. It is believed that he goes up to the 785
sun, and formerly he had to take human flesh along for food. The 787
chiefs held a council the night preceding the beginning of the ceremonies,
and anyone who wanted to show his liberality offered one of [244]
his slaves to be killed in order to serve as food for the Ela'xotla. The
offer was accepted, and a payment of from ten to twenty blankets was
made for the slave. The latter was killed, and the members of the
Ela'xotla order devoured one half of the body before the departure of
the novice to the woods. There the latter was tied up and left to fast.
He may stay there for twenty or thirty days until the spirit appears